



Youth Challenge Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

It is the aim of Youth Challenge 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. Youth Challenge 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 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 Headteachers 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 academy frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

2. Aims and Objectives

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.

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 seen to be valued by the academy.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff, schools and the Early Intervention Service 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.

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 Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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 governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- 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

The Headteacher 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 Champions (SLT) and the Attendance Officer to be able to do so
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

4.3 The SENDCo and Designated LAC Teacher

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- 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

The Designated LAC Teacher is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance of Looked After Child and to communicate with virtual schools when issues with attendance arise

The SENDCo and Designated LAC teacher is Clare Ling and can be contacted via 01204 333872 or email: lingc@boltonimpacttrust.org.uk

4.4 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
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The following designated senior leader responsible for attendance can be contacted via the school office on 01204 333872, or via their email addresses:

Collette Morris (Assistant Head – Lead of Safeguarding): morrisc@boltonimpacttrust.org.uk

4.5 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring pupils arriving late are registered

- Contacting parents of absent children within an hour where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- Making referrals to the EIT service
- Referring any attendance concerns to the key working team
- Overall monitoring of academy attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Monitoring and reporting attendance to the senior leadership team including overall data on personal success targets
- Any child on a CP plan or LAC, but are living at home and are absent contact the EIT team to arrange a home visit.
- 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

The attendance officer is Sarah Palin and can be contacted via 01204 333872 / 07539358892 or email: palins@boltonimpacttrust.org.uk

4.6 Class teachers/form tutors

- Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for individual sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information via Arbor.
- Emphasising with their pupils the importance of good attendance and promptness

4.7 Learning Mentors

These are 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 Attendance Officer where there are concerns
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation
- Providing 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
- Monitoring students' personal success targets for attendance

4.8 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Cover the attendance role when the Attendance officer is absent / attending training / unable to fulfil the role
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the correct staff member where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.9 Parents and pupils

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/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 attendance officer on the first morning of absence
- Informing the academy in advance of any medical appointments in academy time and ensure wherever possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- 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.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the attendance officer, Sarah Palin and can be contacted via 01204 333872 / 07539358892 or email: palins@boltonimpacttrust.org.uk

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school everyday
- Arrive at school on time, everyday
- Attend every timetabled session, 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 amended entry

- The reason for 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 9.15am and ends at 2.40pm.
- Pupils must arrive in school by 9.30am on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 9.30am and will be kept open until 10.00am.
- The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30pm and will be kept open until 1.00pm.

5.2 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 Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then the attendance officer will continue to contact home requesting these details; where appropriate, they may enlist support from other staff members who have a well-established relationship with the family.

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. Where possible, providing the attendance officer with the official appointment letter, text message, email as evidence of the planned appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

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 academy work.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupil registration begins at 9.30am.

Pupils will receive their attendance mark when they arrive between 9.30 – 9.50am.

If a pupil arrives between the times of 9.51 – 10.00am, this will be marked with an 'L' mark on SIMs and this will be monitored. 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.

When pupils arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of registration – after 10.00am, their mark will be counted as an unauthorised absence – this will be represented by a 'U' on SIM's. Wherever possible we will support families to address issues with lateness, however lateness can be used as evidence in the fixed penalty notice procedure.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to academy later than 10.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where a child is absent from the academy and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first hour contact process. **(Appendix 2)**

- The attendance officer check all of the registers from 9.30am – 10am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. In the instances where the children are dual registered with their mainstream school we will contact the schools to inform them of the pupil's absence. We will endeavour to 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
- In the case of children on a safeguarding plan we will inform the social worker on each day of absence.
- In a child is absent for 3 consecutive days without contact from a parent/carer a member of staff will visit the home.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- 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

5.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 4.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly written reports.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The Headteacher 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 Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional 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 extremely 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 reasons for requested absence to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence

6.2 Authorised Absences

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.

Valid reasons that may be considered as **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

6.3 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from the academy without the permission of the academy.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from the academy without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- Late arrival to school. Pupil registration starts at 9.30am. Pupils will receive their attendance mark when they arrive between 9.30 – 9.50am. If a pupil arrives between the times of 9.51 – 10.00am, this will be marked with an 'L' mark on SIMs and this will be monitored. Persistent lateness will be addressed and appropriate actions will be put in place to reduce the number late arrivals. When pupils arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of registration – after 10.00am, their mark will be counted as an unauthorised absence – this will be represented by a 'U' on SIM's. Wherever possible we will support families to address issues with lateness, however lateness can be used as evidence in the fixed penalty notice procedure.

6.4 Absconding from school

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.

Where a pupil, present at formal registration, is found to be absent from school without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

- A] pupils who abscond before the end of the registration period
- B] pupils who abscond after registration
- C] pupils who abscond from school but remain in the school grounds

A] Pupils who abscond before the end of the registration period

Schools are required to register their pupils at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. The register will be open for a period of 30 minutes.

If a pupil absconds from the school during the period of registration, the class register should show the pupil as being absent.

Should the pupil return to school after the end of the registration period, the class register should be amended to indicate a late arrival.

It is good practice when a pupil absconds in these circumstances for the school to make every effort to advise the parents/carers.

B] Pupils who abscond after registration

Once a pupil has been registered as present, the registration period has ended and the class register closed, the school is "in loco parentis".

Should a pupil abscond after the end of the registration period, the school, technically, remains "in loco parentis".

Every attempt should be made to contact the parents/carers to advise them that their child has absconded from school. When parents/carers are contacted, it should be made clear that the responsibility for their child is being passed back to them.

Contact with parents/carers should be by telephone in the first instance and details of attempts to establish contact should be recorded. If the parents/carers are contacted, the attendance register should be amended to show unauthorised absence.

If the parents/carers cannot be contacted, the attendance register remains as the original entry, however there should be a clear comments added to reflect that the pupil is not on site, and continual contact must be attempted until parents/carers have been spoken to. For each incident, the DSL must be consulted and at this stage the course of action may be to report the pupil missing via a police report. However, the responsibility for the pupil remains with the school until parent contact is made. If the DSL is not available, the decision remains with the Headteacher. In their absence the most senior member of staff will make the decision.

C] Pupils who abscond from school but remain in the school grounds

If deemed safe to do so staff should calmly try to speak to the pupil, using a non-confrontational manner to try and persuade them to come back into school. Staff should not pursue the pupil or try to force her/him back into school. However, there may be circumstances where school staff will need to use their judgement, knowledge of the pupil and assessment of the pupil's safety in deciding what to do. A pupil's age, vulnerability and other factors need to be taken into account. For example, it may be dangerous to let a particular pupil wander about the school grounds. The demeanour of the pupil will need to be taken into account. If the pupil is upset or angry, care must be given to how he/she is approached.

In all cases, ***staff should not place themselves in situations of potential danger.***

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.

If a student absconds from site and is out of the sight of staff members, the school does not permit students to return to site. This is to ensure the safety of students and staff who are on site.

However, a student may be permitted to return to school under the following circumstances:

- The student has not left the sight of staff members
- The student has been off site for a minimal amount of time

This decision will be made by a member of the senior management team and reasons will be clearly shared with parents/carers.

Risk assessments

All children attending Youth Challenge are risk assessed and if they have a history of 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.

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 Headteacher or another member of the senior leadership team in order to agree subsequent actions.

Monitoring and evaluation

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

Procedures

If a pupil is suspected of leaving the school site without permission and is deemed as vulnerable or in an emotional state:

- The member of staff will alert the DSL or DDSL who will inform the Headteacher or (in their absence) the Deputy Headteacher or most senior member of staff on site.
- If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is 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 pupil, 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.
- If there is no doubt that the pupil has absconded, the school will contact the police as an emergency situation and the pupil's parent to inform them. Staff will not chase or follow the pupil as this could lead to the pupil wandering further afield, acting impetuously or causing a traffic accident.
- If the child is within an easy distance of the school, staff are not to engage in conversation as the child might be in a distressed state and unable to act in a controlled manner. This would mean there is still the potential for traffic accidents.
- If the child appears to be missing but there is no evidence that he / she has left the site, a quick but thorough search of the site should be conducted before the parents / police are informed.
- If the pupil returns of his / her own volition, parents and (if necessary) the police will be informed. Upon his or her return to school, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil must be seen by the SLT so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions. A written log will be filed on the incident on CPOMS. The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are to be informed
- If possible, the pupil who has absconded should be brought back to school the same day. The parent, child and Headteacher will then discuss the issues and any consequences. This policy will be discussed.

If the Headteacher is aware that a pupil is not acting emotionally but has left the school grounds (e.g. by mistake), the above procedures may be adapted.

Please see **appendix 3** for actions to be taken when a child leaves the site

6.5 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 Headteacher (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

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).

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.

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. Strategies for promoting attendance

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 pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- To work with our mainstream schools to monitor the attendance of pupils who are dual registered.
- 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.
- Early Help plans will be implemented for student whose attendance is cause for concern.

At Youth Challenge, students' attendance, engagement and behaviour are tracked on a lesson-by-lesson basis against their personalised success targets. Our bespoke target system ensures that all students have the opportunity to achieve, regardless of their starting point, and that their individual progress is recognised, celebrated and rewarded. Accruing points enables students to earn rewards in the form of vouchers and half termly trips, and progress is celebrated in our weekly assemblies. Points

can only be accrued through students making positive choices, good attendance being key, and so good attendance is pivotal if students are to earn rewards.

8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

We appreciate that reasons for students 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 students 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 students in their home. The eventual aim with any such plan is to work toward full time on-site attendance when appropriate.

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

In situations where students are unable to attend school due to mental or physical ill health, we endeavor to make all reasonable adjustments possible to support the student in attending. This may mean devising a bespoke timetable, utilising the expertise or premises of other parts of our trust, or educating students in their home. Alongside our academic provision, we are able to offer mentoring and counselling, in addition to signposting students 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.

8.3 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 students to offer a graduated transition back to school, where appropriate and identifying a key adult in school for students to check in with.

9. Attendance monitoring

Our attendance officer, has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Arbor attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the DSL 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.

9.1 Addressing Attendance Concerns

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits at Youth Challenge. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, DSL, Attendance Officer, SENDCo, form tutors, keyworkers and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends academy regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the

parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the academy with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the academy has a responsibility to make a referral to the Early Intervention Service.

The Early Intervention Service (EIT) may issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EIT from the academy as part of the academy's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

9.2 Response to Persistent Non-Attendance

Some of the students who join us have historically had low levels of attendance for prolonged period of times. We appreciate that for these students, attending school full time may be a very daunting prospect and there may be a transition period in which we work with them and their family to gradually encourage on site attendance. For these students we introduce a temporary reduced timetable.

9.3 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

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

9.4 Analysing attendance

The school 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

9.5 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.4)
- Provide regular attendance reports all form teachers, form mentors and key workers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads)
- 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

9.6 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 6.5, above)

10. Monitoring arrangements

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

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy*
- Behaviour policy

*For information relating to Children Missing in Education, please see the safeguarding 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	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Youth Challenge Secondary - Pupil Absent Follow Up

What happens every morning?

- Attendance officer check registers from 9.30am – 10.00am
- Attendance officer identifies those pupils who are absent by 10.00am
- If there is no contact from home between 9.40am – 10.00am, Attendance officer will contact parents/carers by telephone to ascertain reasons for absence.
- If a valid reason is given the absence is to be recorded on Arbor
- If no reason is given this will be chased by the keyworker



If a child is on dual roll or on a Traded Place

Children on dual register or a traded placement the attendance officer will contact the main school to inform them of the pupil's absence.



If a child is on level 4 of the Framework for Action

Children on a safeguarding plan the attendance officer will inform the social worker on each day of the absence. The EIT team will also be contacted before 10.30am .



If a child is Looked After

The attendance officer will inform the social worker on each day of absence.
The attendance officer will contact the EIT team before 10.30am



In a child is absent for 3 consecutive days without parental contact

- A member of staff (Attendance officer) will visit the home to identify the issues
 - If necessary, the child's key worker will create an attendance plan (EHA)
- Any safeguarding concerns we will be investigated and referred to appropriate agency.
-



If the child's attendance becomes a concern

- Key worker home visit takes place to explore the issues and create an attendance plan (EHA)
- If no progress formal school meeting to take place SLT
- If attendance continues to be a concern, parents may be placed on a 'Notice to improve' period for 3 weeks (max 6 weeks) to support and encourage improvement. If the 'Notice to improve' period fails a fine may be triggered.
- Referral to other agencies, including the Early Intervention Team

Appendix 3

Youth Challenge Secondary – Procedures for when a child absconds

It is important to determine the emotional state of the child as they have absconded.

