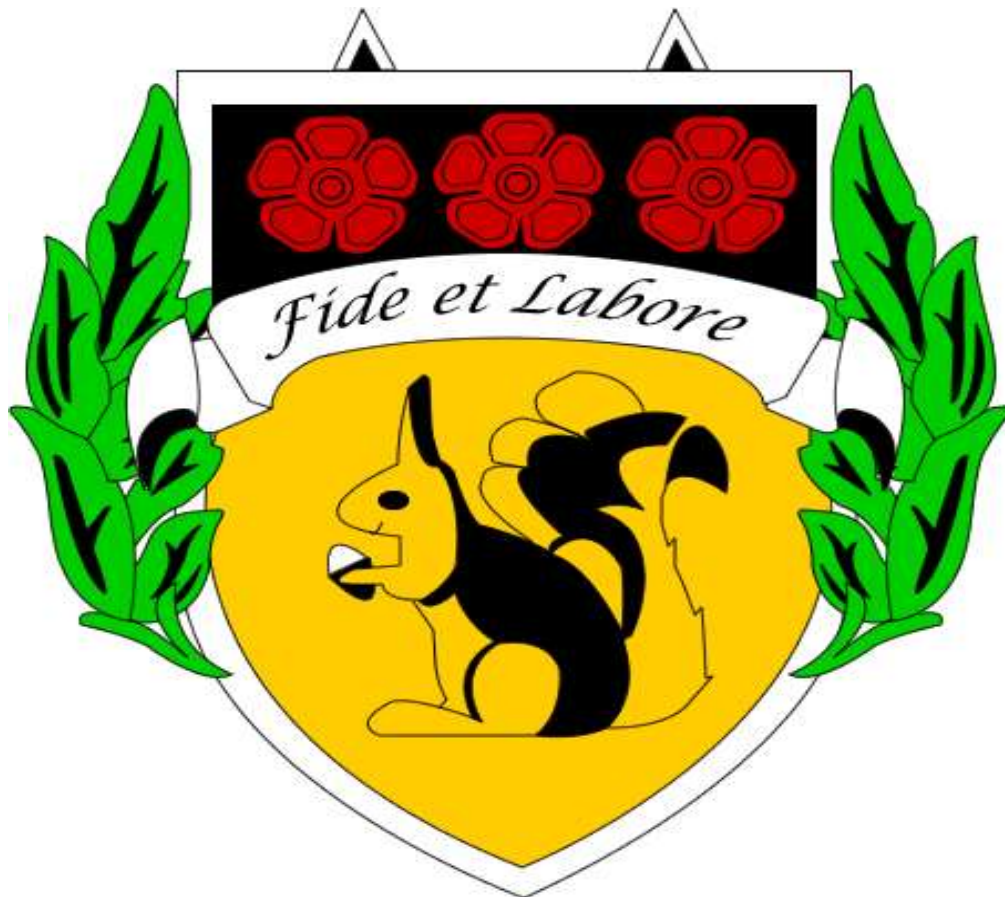


Approved : December 2019
Reviewed : Biannual

Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School



Attendance Policy

MAIN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

Reviewed in October 2019 (PWR)

Reviewed every other year, or as appropriate

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Lancashire County Council's Code of Conduct document relating to fixed penalty notices.

Aims

The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment of which each member of the school community feels a part, and is secure. We seek to ensure that all our students receive a full-time education where appropriate which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential. All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

To meet these objectives an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies is in place to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Safeguarding: These measures aim to ensure that any student who has not arrived in school without the prior knowledge of parents/carers is identified and a reason sought.

We aim to maintain a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.

Registration and Late Arrivals:

- Students are formally registered during morning registration and in Period 4 each day. This forms the legal completion of the daily register.
- Students are marked as present only if they are physically in attendance at the registration session. In all other cases they are registered using the code N (*No reason for absence yet provided*).
- N codes are dealt with by the Attendance Secretary working in the General Office.
- Clearly defined late registration procedures are in place: students are late if they arrive after 8.40 am. They then sign into the General Office. Response to lateness: persistent lateness will result in school detention.
- Our formal "close of registration" in the morning is at 9.20 am. Students arriving after this time will be registered using the U code – which will class as an unauthorised absence.
- Teaching staff will also register student attendance at each timetabled lesson.
- Students needing to leave during the school day for appointments must show their appointment card or letter from their parent to staff in the General Office before they are allowed to sign out. Parents may also telephone the General Office in advance to inform us of the need for a student to leave school early for a medical appointment. Students arriving late because of medical appointments must show their appointment card or letter from parents when they arrive at school otherwise they will be recorded as late.

Absence:

- N codes are dealt with by the main school attendance secretary working in the General Office in conjunction with Heads of Year.
- Parents/carers should telephone school as soon as possible with reasons for student absence. Parents can also use the Insight App to inform school of an absence. If a parent/carer has not contacted school by the end of the first period, they are telephoned by the Attendance Secretary and reasons for absence are sought. This is a safeguarding

procedure, primarily to check that absent students are safely at home; as such, we request parents to contact school on each day of absence.

- Upon their return following an absence students must bring a letter from parents to explain the absence. This should be submitted to their Head of Year. This is not necessary if parents have used the Insight App as a reason for absence is provided via the App submission.
- Only the school within the context of the law can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is offered at all - the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where a school has reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested from the parents. If the school continues to be dissatisfied, then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

We aim to provide quality impartial support, advice and guidance to parents and students

- Pastoral staff work together with students and parents to improve attendance where there is a problem. Further support and guidance is provided by the school's Student Support Officer (SSO) for KS3 and 4.
- Attendance is reviewed on a weekly basis by the Attendance Secretary; passing concerns to Heads of Year.
- Pastoral staff will liaise with the SSO when necessary. Any referrals will be accompanied by an attendance printout.
- Holidays should not be taken in term time and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Absences can only be authorised under extreme circumstances – see appendix A (amendments to the 2006 regulations).
- Parents may make specific requests for absence to the headmaster, each of which will be considered on an individual basis (for example, to allow participation in formal sporting or musical activities etc. where the student is clearly involved in a pursuit which will benefit their educational development). Request for family holidays cannot be authorised. Attendance at family funerals/weddings, etc. will be dealt with on an individual basis.
- School will allow 1 day per year of authorised absence for the religious observation of Eid. Parents should inform school of the date of the absence in advance and we will then then telephone home to check on the safety of a missing child.
- Fixed penalty notices can be imposed by schools on parents whose children have accumulated five days' (10 sessions) unauthorised absence during a term or 10 days (20 sessions) over two consecutive terms. The initial fine is £60 if paid within 21 days. If paid after this, but within 28 days, the fine is £120. If a fine is not paid, this may result in a subsequent court hearing. Parents may be issued with up to 3 penalty notices in a year.
- The local authority has produced a code of conduct for the issuing of penalty notices that school adheres to (available on request). This code sets out the criteria that school has adopted relating to fixed penalty notices (see previous bullet point). The local authority administers the scheme.
- School and the SSO will show evidence of all efforts made to work with the parent to solve the issue – see appendix B (Statutory Guidance, August 2013).
- Deletion from the school register for non-attendance – see Appendix C
- Parents are asked to provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for school.

We aim to recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

- Pastoral staff will be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning students.

- SSO, parents and students are all consulted in reintegration process.
- All staff are involved/informed in/of a reintegration process.
- Opportunities for counselling are provided.
- Timescale for review of reintegration plan should be agreed by all parties.

We aim to maintain a high overall percentage attendance of students at school of 96%.

- Whole School Attendance policy is applied consistently.
- School maintains a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- Attendance issues feature in the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
- Progress in attendance is monitored against measurable outcomes.
- School reports attendance figures to the local authority on a regular basis – see appendix D.

We aim to make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.

- Attendance/punctuality are featured as a regular item in monitoring and end-of-term letters to parents and in induction meetings.
- Attendance figures for each student are available via Insight to parents.
- Attendance issues are the main focus in SSO/Pastoral staff evaluation meetings and in relevant staff meetings.

We aim to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.

- Computerised registration is fully utilised in analysis of attendance data.
- Recording is standardised of:
 - authorised/unauthorised absence
 - educational activity
 - presence
- Information is available for:
 - governors – provided with data three times a year
 - pastoral staff
 - other school staff
 - parents via school report, or on request
 - SSO has access to all data
- Pastoral staff are enabled to identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

We aim to promote effective partnerships with the school SSO and with other services and agencies.

- Key staff for liaison with SSO and other agencies are the Heads of Year and the Assistant Head (Pastoral).
- Initial enquiry/intervention is carried out by the Head of Year prior to referral and relevant information gathered to assist completion of referral.
- Multi-agency liaison meetings are convened as appropriate.
- List of named contacts within the local community is available e.g. community police contact officer.

Appendix A (Amendments to the 2006 Regulations).

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special

circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Appendix B (taken from Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice - August 2013)

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. All schools and the police must send copies of penalties issued to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalty notices can be used where the student’s absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty notices 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 five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

The Code of Conduct

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 200724 set out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. This includes a requirement that every local authority must draw up and publish a Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices, after consulting all schools, including academies, and the police. The code should set out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice. These could include: a number of unauthorised absences, perhaps within a rolling academic year; one-off instances of irregular attendance such as holidays taken during term time without the school’s permission; and where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason. The local authority administers the scheme for all schools in its area, including academies and Free Schools.

Payment of Penalty Notice

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority. The parents can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice.

Appendix C

Removing students from the admissions and attendance registers

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 govern when a student can be removed from the admissions/attendance register. See section 8 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/regulation/8/made>).

In general, students can be deleted from the register of one school if they register at another. However, it is possible for any student to register at more than one school and, where this happens, there are restrictions on applying the power to delete students because they are registered at another school. Schools can only delete students from the register if one of the circumstances in these regulations applies.

All other deletions are illegal and could result the court proceedings against the person responsible. With the exception of students who are subject to a school attendance order and students with special educational needs (SEN) for whom the LEA has made arrangements, there is no requirement for LEA approval of deletions from registers.

Appendix D

Half-termly reports on attendance are prepared by an assistant head and submitted to the Attendance Department at County Hall.

Persistent Absence is attendance of 90% or lower

Strategies to improve attendance:

- Good attendance is rewarded
- Persistent lateness attracts sanctions
- Weekly reports produced by the Attendance Secretary for Heads of Year and who inputs attendance and late arrivals data will raise immediate concerns.
- School liaises closely with the AIW and with parents
- In the case of persistent absence, school works closely with other agencies.
- Student support and target-setting
- Parents have immediate access to attendance data via Insight.