

Reviewed: draft policy for review September 2022

Review Period: annually

Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School



Attendance Policy

Rationale: Every Day Counts

It is our privilege and our responsibility to provide for the educational, social, moral, cultural and emotional needs of all the young people in our school. However, as demonstrated by various studies, many of the outcomes as we prepare our young people for post-school life, will be jeopardised if regular attendance is not maintained. As a school we believe firmly that good attendance is an entitlement and expectation for every one of our registered students and it is the legal requirement of parents and carers to ensure that their child is in school. Poor attendance will not only result in under achievement at school - it will most likely affect the quality and satisfaction gained from the school experience. It is important to remember that there are only four reasons in law for non-attendance – religious observance, illness, school transport not being available and any other unavoidable cause. Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School's target is for all students to achieve a minimum of 96%.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure the school has high levels of attendance for the benefit of each individual student and the good of the whole school community.
- To ensure that parents/carers and staff are aware of the school's expectations and procedures regarding absence.
- To ensure there are robust systems for monitoring the attendance of all students and intervening where necessary.
- To ensure provision of appropriate support, advice and guidance to parents/carers, students and staff.
- To provide an agreed framework which defines roles and responsibilities and establishes procedures for their consistent application.
- To ensure we have a system which consistently and coherently records absence and lateness and uses the available data to provide clear and concise information to all stakeholders in the attendance and punctuality relationship between school and home.
- To provide a coherent system of rewards to recognise achievement in attendance.
- To provide a coherent and consistent system of sanctions to assist in remedying persistent nonattendance at school.

Roles and Responsibilities:**Headteacher:**

- Oversight of school policy and its operation.
- To ensure that those involved in the policy work coherently and consistently in its operation.
- To make final decisions regarding the removal of pupils from the school roll.
- Final decisions regarding leave of absence requests.

SLT Attendance Lead:

- Report on Attendance to the Headteacher and Governors.
- Produce the school's Attendance Policy and review and evaluate its operation.
- Line manage the effectiveness of staff regarding the policy's operation.

- Raise the profile of attendance and punctuality with all stakeholders (staff, parents/carers, students).
- Analyse all relevant data re attendance leading to identification of priority groups and assessing impact of action.
- Liaise with Behaviour and Attendance Officer at LCC, regarding the adjustment of the school register re long term absence.
- Recommending to the Headteacher the use of fixed penalty notices or appropriate legal action as authorised by the governors for the promotion of better attendance.
- Monitoring and managing Heads of Year, Pastoral Managers and Attendance Admin in their application of the procedures required by the policy.
- Maintain the high profile of attendance in meetings with pastoral staff, students and in assemblies.

Heads of Year:

- Effectively manage the role played by Form Tutors in their year group by promoting increased levels of attendance through targets for all students.
- Maintain the high profile of attendance in assemblies and in meetings with Form Tutors
- Ensure the effective operation of the school's policies and procedures on attendance including the rewards and sanctions.
- Refer students as necessary to the Deputy Headteacher regarding attendance.
- Discuss attendance and highlight students of concern in fortnightly line management meetings.
- Be aware of the lead professional for any individual case and liaise as appropriate.

Form Tutors:

- Accurately register students within Form Time at the start of the day.
- Alert HOY/SLT Attendance Lead of any causes of concern.
- Discuss absence and attendance with individual students.
- Review with students their attendance and set targets on a half termly basis.
- Administer the school procedures regarding rewards and sanctions for attendance.
- Follow up conversations had with students with parents/carers and record the conversation on Synergy (unless safe guarding concerns arise then CPOMS).

Attendance Admin:

- Monitor the completion of registers and issue reminders when they are not completed by staff.
- Maintain the operation of lesson monitor system by staff.
- Produce relevant data when required.
- Produce statistics as required.
- Make and receive first day of absence communication with parents/carers. This will normally be by text but will be a phone call to students who are an attendance concern or where there are safeguarding issues.
- Produce attendance letters for parents at the request of SLT and Year Heads.
- Monitor the production of absence letters and chase up Heads of Year as necessary to ensure this.
- Manage the sanctions procedures regarding the placing of pupils in detentions as the result of lateness.

- Monitoring the application process by parents for leave of absence and refer these to the Headteacher.
- Prepare paperwork for fines and court proceedings.
- Refer as appropriate, to SLT Attendance Lead, cases where fixed penalties or alternative legal action may be a way of increasing attendance.
- Produce weekly reports to monitor percentage attendance.

Teaching Staff:

- Take register within the first 10 minutes on the school absence system. All students to be marked as present, absent or late. No students should be left with blank space for any lesson.
- Mark as late students who arrive after the last name on the register has been called and record how many minutes late they were.
- Alert Lesson Support staff of any student missing the lesson for no obvious reason.
- Promote with students the link between attendance and attainment.

Lead professionals for attendance

Students causing attendance concern will be allocated a lead professional who will

- Monitor the attendance of the students
- Maintain communication with parents/carers and record all communications on Synergy as evidence for penalty notices and possible court action.
- Undertake home visits as appropriate
- Lead the stage 2 attendance contract meeting with parents
- Liaise with attendance officer regarding warning letters and penalty notices

Parents & carers

- Ensure pupils have regular and timely attendance in school unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.
- Provide our attendance team with a legitimate reason for non-attendance on days of absence.
- Attend any attendance meetings which may be held in school, at the home or in another location as appropriate.
- Respond to any Local Authority or Court Action.
- Support the school policy for attendance including home visits.
- Understand it is at the school's discretion whether to authorise absence.
- Make medical appointments outside of school time unless it is urgent and cannot wait.
- Provide evidence in the form of an appointment card or letter for medical appointments taken in school time.
- Provide medical evidence for any absence which exceeds 5 days.

Guidelines due to the Covid pandemic:

Current expectations of attendance from the DfE state that:

- From the start of the autumn term 2021 attendance in school is mandatory and the usual rules on attendance apply.
- Schools should now record attendance and follow up absence in the usual way.

- The duty on parents to ensure the regular attendance of children of compulsory school age is no longer disapplied.
- The ability to issue sanctions such as penalty notices is no longer disapplied.
- Students should not attend school if they are displaying symptoms of Covid 19 – they should take a PCR test and only return to school if the test is negative.
- Students should not attend school if they have a positive lateral flow or PCR test. They can return to school on day 6 of isolation if they have a negative lateral flow on day 5 and morning of day 6.

Monitoring Attendance:

Students' attendance will be monitored by staff and the following stages will be used:

Percentage Attendance:	Stage:	Action/Interventions:
93%-95%	Stage 1	Letter sent home highlighting the fall below school target
Less than 93%	Stage 2	Stage 2 letters will be sent with an invitation to a meeting to set an attendance contract The contract will still come into force even if parents/carers do not attend the meeting and no further absence will be authorised Penalty warnings will be issued after 10 unauthorised sessions

The loss of learning due to poor attendance:

		Over a year	Over 5 years
95%	½ day every 2 weeks	2 weeks	10 weeks
90%	1 day every 2 weeks	4 weeks	20 weeks
85%	1 ½ days every 2 weeks	6 weeks	30 weeks
80%	2 days every 2 weeks	8 weeks	40 weeks (a full year)

Higher overall absence leads to lower attainment at KS4

The Department for Education (DfE) published [research](#) in 2016 which found that:

- The higher the overall absence rate across KS4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS4
- Pupils with no absence are 1.3 times more likely to achieve level 4 or above, and 3.1 times more likely to achieve level 5 or above, than pupils that missed 10-15% of all sessions
- Pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*- C or equivalent including English and mathematics than pupils that missed 15-20% of KS4 lessons

The recording of attendance

Attendance registers will be marked in line with the DfE statutory guidance. Students testing positive for Covid 19 with evidence of a positive PCR test will be marked as Ill in the school attendance register. This is an authorised absence.

Sanctions for failure to attend school regularly

The DfE has indicated that sanctions will now be used to address non-attendance at school. As a school, we will continue to offer as much support as is reasonable to prevent the need for such an approach. However, when needed legal interventions will be used.

School attendance framework

1. School starts at 8:40am and students in all years are expected to be in Form Time with their Tutor by that time otherwise they will be marked late. To aid this transition a warning bell will sound at 8.35am. Any student arriving after 9:30am will receive a U code indicating that they have missed the morning session. This will be classed as unauthorised absence and will affect a student's attendance percentage. The pm registration mark will be taken at the beginning of period 4 by class teachers. Both am and pm registrations are statutory responsibilities. Exceptions:
 - Where a student is on a school visit or other placement the register will be marked accordingly and so lists must be provided by supervising staff to main reception and the Attendance Officer.
 - Where a student is marked absent and the school has not been provided with a reason, contact will be made with home. The absence will remain as unauthorised unless an acceptable reason is provided within 2 weeks.
2. If a student is unable to attend school for a legitimate reason, parents/carers are expected to contact school by phone or through Synergy by 8.30am and the register will be adjusted accordingly.
3. The school will undertake home visits where there are attendance concerns in order to fulfil its safe guarding responsibilities and to help overcome any barriers to school attendance. School are not responsible for bringing students into school.
4. Absence will be authorised in the following situations:
 - Religious observance which falls outside the normal school holidays will be authorised up to one day
 - Illness will be authorised but where there is repeated illness for which a student is not receiving specialist medical treatment, the school may request evidence such as an appointment card or prescription and refer the student to the school nurse
 - Where school transport has failed and the student is reasonably unable to get to school any other way
 - Where the headteacher deems the situation to be exceptional (including compassionate reasons)

Absence will not be authorised:

- Where no explanation for the absence is provided or the explanation is not satisfactory
- For holidays taken during term time.

5 Student attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis by the Deputy Headteacher in charge of Attendance and on a half termly basis. The Deputy Headteacher will provide a termly report on attendance for SLT and Governors.

6 Morning lateness:

If students arrive in school after the 08:40am bell, they are deemed to be late. Each time a pupil is late they will be placed in out of circulation at lunchtime. If the pupil is late after 9.30am they will be placed in their year group after school detention.

7 Leave of Absence:

The school policy applies requires a request in advance of leave.

- Requests for leave of absence should be made three weeks in advance using the leave of absence form. This must be submitted to school as soon as possible. In emergency and unforeseen circumstances please contact school as soon as possible.
- It is the school's responsibility alone to make decisions regarding leave of absence.
- Parents/ carers requesting leave of absence should submit the appropriate form to the Headteacher. The parent/carer will be notified accordingly.
- Where leave of absence is taken despite leave not being granted or applied for, absence will be recorded as unauthorised and action taken if necessary.
- Leave of absence cannot be granted in retrospect.
- If a parent takes leave of absence when it has not been granted by the Headteacher a Fixed Penalty notice will be issued.
- In extreme circumstances a student may be removed from the school roll when a parent has chosen to remove them from school for an extended period. In such cases the parents will need to reapply to the school to have their child readmitted to the school roll.

8 Part time Attendance:

The only reasons why a student might attend school on a part-time basis are:

- A temporary medical condition. This should be supported by written medical advice and appropriate provision will then be put in place.

9 Fixed Term Penalty Notices

This is an alternative to prosecution if a parent has failed to ensure his/her child has attended school. (Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 brought into force Sections 44A and 44B of Education Act 1996 which empower designated LA Officer, Headteacher and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.) They can be used at the discretion of the Headteacher.

The cost per penalty notice is £120 per parent per child, but can be discharged at £60 if paid within 21 days. If not paid within the 21 days the cost reverts back to the original £120. Failure to pay will lead to prosecution and court action.

Fixed Term Notices can be issued for unauthorised absence due to unapproved leave in term time, parentally condoned absence, unwarranted delayed return from an extended holiday without school agreement, or persistent late arrival after the register is closed.

Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School will use Fixed Term penalties at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting upon advice from the Deputy Headteacher, when all other strategies have been used and have failed. There should be at least 10 unauthorised sessions in one term or 14 over two successive terms. A record of all contact between parents/carers needs to be kept. In all cases a final warning will be issued, in writing, before a Fixed Term Penalty Notice is issued. All adults with parental responsibility will be advised of the school's intention to use the notices and each year a reminder will be issued.

Section 444 Legal Action

In law, an offence occurs if a parent fails to secure a child's attendance at the school at which they are registered. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Section 36 of the Children Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

Legal action in the Courts may be used as a strategy to improve attendance when parents have failed to secure their children's regular attendance at school. In such instances and as a last resort if all other interventions have failed, Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School will, if deemed necessary, request that the LA consider legal action to address significant and unauthorised absenteeism.

10 Child Missing Education:

A Child Missing Education referral to the Local Authority should be submitted in the following circumstances:

- If Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School has received written notification from the parent/carers that the student is receiving education otherwise than at school (CME9 form)
- The student is moving/has moved from the area and is not known to have registered at another school (CME1 form)
- That the student is not in a fit state of health to attend and has been certified as such by a medical professional and that it has not been indicated that the student will not continue at school (CME9 form)
- That the student is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and BRGS does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student will return to the school at the end of that period (CME9 form)
- That the student has been permanently excluded from Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School (CME9 form)

A CME1 referral must have been made at a stage prior to the deletion from the school register in the following circumstances:

- In the case of a student granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7(3) that – a. The student has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; b. BRGS does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and c. Both BRGS and the Local Education Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the child is.
- That he/she has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and – a. At no time was his/her absence during that period authorised by BRGS in accordance with regulation 6(2); b. BRGS does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; c. Both BRGS and the Local Education Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the student is. (all three elements must apply)

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