



Absence and Attendance (NON-STATUTORY)

Other Information:	
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Aim

The school recognises that non attendance and absence has a negative impact upon attainment and achievement. We will provide a welcoming, stimulating and structured learning environment, to encourage children to attend school. School will work closely with parents/carers and the local authority, to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and punctually and to improve the overall percentage of pupils in school.

Local Authority

Parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 year olds) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities. Attendance enforcement is carried out by the Local Authority Early Years Intervention Team who provide an important link between schools and families. The EYIT communicates with school on a regular basis to monitor the attendance.

School

To assist in monitoring and controlling school attendance the school employs the following measures:

- An electronic registration system
- First day contact with parents (and other named contacts) of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge (see Appendix 1 for procedures)
- Home welfare checks for long term absences
- Log kept regarding pupils out of school on appointments/agreed absence
- The promotion of school attendance being shared by everyone in the school
- The collection and analysis of data about attendance to check pupils progress against measurable outcomes
- Weekly 100% attendance 'chance card' tea party draw for children
- Termly bronze, silver and gold 100% attendance certificates
- Meetings with parents (including parent contracts)

School is required to tell the Local Authority if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised. School can notify the Local Authority earlier if there are areas of concern.

* First day visits are conducted on the first day of school absence for any child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan or Interim Care Order and living at home, these visits are in order to check on the child's welfare, the reason for absence and to confirm an expected return date. These visits are carried out by the Early Intervention officer and/or the duty social worker, and feedback will be given to school.

Responsibilities of parents

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly. If a child does not attend regularly, parents will need to work in partnership with the school and any assigned Early Years Intervention Officer to resolve the problem. From 1 March 2001, parents found guilty of school attendance offences could be subject to a penalty of up to £2500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Custodial Sentences depending on individual circumstances.

School requires parents:

- To notify any absence on the first day of absence by 9.00 a.m.
- For a period of continuous illness – to telephone school each morning whilst absent (this ensures that the child is safe and not missing on the way to school)

Children with health needs who cannot attend school

Pupils may miss school due to health reasons. This may be illness (physical or mental health), injury or a planned admission to hospital. The health problem may be time-limited or a child may have a long-term condition. Most absences from school will be for minor, short-term health problems and absences from school will be short and infrequent. During this absence parents will be expected to support their child in accessing relevant school Apps and or websites named in the remote learning policy. However, some pupils may miss school for longer periods due to health reasons. In this case, class teachers will communicate with parents to provide guidance and support regarding curriculum content being covered in class.

Where a pupil is not in school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative due to ill health and where the health need and necessity for absence has been validated by school. This is likely to include details of the health problem, how long the condition is expected to last and the likely outcome, a treatment plan and advice provided by suitable professionals.

The educational guidance provided will be tailored to the child's age, aptitude and ability (including any special educational needs) and any other individual needs (such as health, behaviour, social and emotional needs and any disability)

The aim, in all cases, is to reintegrate pupils back into school as soon as they are fit to do so. Transition arrangements might include: home visits from key staff, reduced timetables as well as the following:

In Y2-Y6 the pupil will be expected to access 'Century' a learning platform with a bespoke curriculum tailored to meet individual needs and also 'Oak National Academy' daily.

In Rec-Y1 the pupil will be expected to access daily learning on 'Oak National Academy' where learning can be found appropriate to their year group.

In addition, all pupils will be expected to continue with daily reading and access any other online platforms that they are able to e.g. Spelling Shed, TT Rockstars etc.

Pupil registration

The school doors open in the morning at 8.40am and close at 8.50am, registration closes in class by 8.52am. Any pupils arriving after the school doors close at 8.50am will need to enter school through the main entrance, where a late log will be completed. If a pupil arrives within 30 minutes of the register closing, school will determine whether or not this absence is unauthorised. (Factors to be considered will include exceptional weather events, a family / domestic emergency, unforeseen significant transport delay, child's current attendance & punctuality record, parental engagement with school & SEND)*

DfE (Department for Education) guidelines state that the register must be closed no longer than 30 minutes after it opens.

All unauthorised lateness will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

School ensures that an attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

Authorised or unauthorised absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from an authorised representative of the school. This includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation (and any evidence requested) has been provided.

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from an authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

*Late arrival at school after the register has closed will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Family holidays

Children are at school for a total of 190 days every academic year. Weekends account for 110 days, holidays account for 65 days. We feel therefore, that there is more than enough time/opportunity for holidays out of school time. With only 190 school days per year, it is essential that every attempt is made by parents/carers to get their child to school every day. All term time holidays will be unauthorised and may result in a fine being issued.

Any absence that immediately precedes or follows a school holiday will require evidence of the illness or will result in being categorised as unauthorised.

Under education law, 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). Exceptional circumstances may include, the funeral of an immediate family member or religious festival-1 day per year. Any decision will take into account individual circumstances and take account of:

- the age of the pupil
- the time of year proposed for the trip
- its nature and parents' wishes
- the overall attendance pattern of the pupil
- the pupil's stage of education, progress and achievement levels

A child's absence from school for more than ten consecutive days may result in their removal from the school roll.

Penalty notices for unauthorised late/ absence is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.

Penalty notice fines are issued by Bolton Council in accordance with their Penalty Notice Protocol. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority for failure to ensure regular attendance, according to s444, Education Act 1996.

Appendix 1 - Attendance Procedures

When a child is absent from school, class teachers and office staff must follow strict procedure.

- If a child is absent from school in the morning with no known reason provided by the parents/ carers in advance, they must be given an absent mark 'N' on the class register. They must also make a note in the comments section stating that the pupil is absent alongside their own initials.
- When the register is checked by the office, office staff must enter an absent child's mark as 'N' (for no reason yet provided) until the reason is known.
- If a child arrives to school after 9.30am and was not late for any medical or other authorised reason, they will receive a 'U' mark (unauthorised late, after registers have closed).
- Office staff must check messages taken for the morning, along with any answer phone messages to see if the parent of any absentee has contacted school.
- If no message has been received, office staff must contact the parents to find out why a child is absent.
- Should a parent confirm as to why their child is absent, office staff must amend the SIMS record with the appropriate letter code.*
- If a voicemail is left and parents do not respond with a valid reason for absence, the child will be marked as an unauthorised absence with an 'O' in the register.
- Short-term absence - Any standard absences will be managed by the office staff e.g. reasons for absence, appointments, etc. but, there may be occasions when absences are referred to the DHT/HT e.g. the reasons given for absence are questionable, and parents need to be spoken to/challenged by a senior member of staff.

*When children, who are subject to a Child Protection Plan or LAC are absent, a decision will be made by the DSL as to whether it is appropriate for the EIT team to conduct a home visit (dependent upon information received, context and social worker advice).

Persistent Lateness/ Absence

- Parents of children arriving at school late or being picked up late will be asked to complete an individual 'late log' this will contain the date, time, reason for lateness and a signature.
- Class teachers as well as office staff must be vigilant and take note of any children who start to show a pattern of lateness or are regularly absent from school.
- If concerned, class teachers may ask office staff for a SIMS printout of a particular child's record of attendance and present this to their parent/ carer in order to draw their attention to the amount of class time their child is missing, in the hope of this being corrected.
- Things to look out for concerning lateness and absences are:
 - reoccurring absences on the same day i.e. only being absent on Thursdays, etc.
 - having regular medical appointments with no explanation from parents as to what the medical issue may be, again especially on reoccurring days.
 - in the case of children of whose parents share custody, being repeatedly late or absent when staying with one parent, compared with the other.
 - repeated late pick-ups after school.
 - Continual 'illness' days for prolonged periods
- Should a child be absent on three occasions during the academic year, they will be issued with a letter alerting parents about their attendance and reminding them of the attendance policy.
- If there are two further episodes of absence, another letter will be sent requesting a meeting with the Attendance Lead to discuss the importance of attendance at school.
- If, after having met with parents about their child's attendance, school still has concerns and little improvement has been made, office staff should then contact the Early Intervention Team and /or the school nurse who will decide on a course of action to try and rectify the situation.
- This intervention could mean a short home visit to parents to discuss any issues they may be having, or to set up a meeting with parents, school staff and an early intervention officer to see if there are any changes which can be made by those involved.
- If still no progress is made and absences continue, medical documentation will be requested from parents of children who are frequently absent from school because of minor illnesses or absence immediately adjacent to a school holiday. If no medical evidence can be provided, then the absence will be unauthorised.

- If the number of unauthorised absences exceeds 4 full days in one term or 8 sessions, the school/early intervention team may feel that a monetary fine is necessary to encourage parents/ carers to ensure their child is in school regularly and on time.
- Long-term - At the end of each week, office staff and the Attendance Lead will look at attendance patterns, and identify anyone under 97%. Acceptable reasons for absence at this level will be filtered out.

Below is the guidance we provide for parents

Education is the most important gift we can give our children and a day lost is one day too many. At Ladybridge, we believe that regular attendance is linked directly to raising achievement and helps develop skills for life. Please support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of your child by ensuring that they attend school regularly and arrive on time.

What should I do if my child is absent from school?

- Contact the School Office by 9.00am on the first morning of absence to notify us of the reason for absence.
- Medical documentation will be requested for any absence from parents of children who are frequently absent from school because of minor illnesses or absence immediately adjacent to a school holiday. They may also be offered a meeting with the School Nurse.
- Provide medical documentation (e.g. letters/appointment cards) in advance of any medical appointments (e.g. hospital/dentist). Routine dental check- ups or non-emergency doctor appointments should, where possible, be made outside of school hours or, if this is not possible, at the very end of the school day.

Late Arrival at School

Children can access school via their classroom door from 8.40am. The school bell rings for class doors to close at 8.50am, to enable all children to be settled in class for registration. We expect all children to be on time. If your child is going to be late due to exceptional circumstances, please advise the office by telephone. If your child arrives after 8.50am. they will only be able to access the building via the main entrance as all other doors are locked for security. They must report to the office into school to ensure they are marked in the relevant registers, and a 'late log' is completed to record the reason for their lateness.

Late Pick Up from School

We expect every pupil to be picked up on time at the end of the school day. If you are going to be late collecting your child from school at 3.15pm, please contact school so we can ensure your child remains safe. If your child is left uncollected, every effort will be made to contact you or other emergency contacts. If your child has not been collected by 4.00pm then Social Services will be contacted, in order for alternative arrangements to be made for the care of your child. (Unless there are exceptional circumstances).

Late Pick UP from Extra-curricular clubs

We expect every pupil to be picked up on time at the end of the after school club. If your child is left uncollected, every effort will be made to contact you or other emergency contacts. If your child has not been collected by 4.40pm then Social Services will be contacted, in order for alternative arrangements to be made for the care of your child. (Unless there are exceptional circumstances).

How you can help:

- Make sure your child understands the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Don't let your child miss school for minor ailments
- Arrange appointments and outings after school hours or at weekends or school holidays
- Check the school website and newsletters for term dates when planning your holidays

We understand that children do get sick and we are not asking you to send your children to school when they are unwell, but we are asking you to ensure they return to school as soon as they are able to do so.

A large amount of time is dedicated to monitoring attendance by the office staff and Attendance Lead. Some attendance initiatives are listed below: -

- We have a first day response, therefore each parent is called if their child is absent and we have not heard from them.
- Weekly 100% attendance 'chance card' tea party draw for children
- Termly bronze, silver and gold 100% attendance certificates
- Weekly class league table
- Termly 'best' class reward
- Referrals to Early Intervention Officer and School Nurse when required.