



Attendance for Learning Policy

Date Approved	September 2022
Approved by	Headteacher
Date Adopted by School	September 2022
Review Date	September 2023
Policy owner Role	Laura Fielden Headteacher

Rationale

At Bowland High we wish to maintain a high level of attendance and punctuality as we believe that these are both unequivocally linked to student progress. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential prerequisites of successful learning. They are also an important training and preparation for the world of work. Ensuring good attendance must, therefore, be a high priority for both school and parents. Bowland High has an expected target attendance of 96% or above.

Aims

The school will:

- Offer an environment for pupils in which they feel valued, safe, and enjoy learning
- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- Develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Reward good attendance and punctuality
- Encourage parents/carers to play an active role in resolving attendance issues

Definitions

Bowland High is required to classify any absence as either authorised or unauthorised. In order to classify absence parents/carers are always required to give a reason or cause for an absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping their children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Leave of absence which has not been authorised by the school

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. We believe any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between Bowland High, the parents and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, we do not want parents to cover up the absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Support systems exist to help with such problems.

'Persistent absence' refers to absence of more than 10%, whether authorised or unauthorised. The Department for Children, Schools and Families state that students with persistent absence are often those unlikely to attain at school and stay in education after the age of 16 years. They are also significantly more likely to engage in anti-social behaviour and youth crime and are more at risk of other negative outcomes (including teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol abuse).

Strategies

The Registration system

The school's computerised registration system (PARS) is the vehicle for:

- Receiving and storing information and data
- Generating attendance records, producing statistical analyses and reports

It provides the school with the means to respond promptly to unauthorised absence from school or from lessons, to weeks of broken attendance and to the frequency of alleged absence due to illness. It is essential that the information stored in the main computer is, at any time, as accurate and up to date as possible. The attendance co-ordinator is responsible for maintaining and updating, as required, this central record.

Attendance and Registration procedures

Registration is a legal requirement. There are, therefore, duties and responsibilities that must be recognised and undertaken.

The responsibility of the pupil

- Pupils should accept responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality
- All pupils must attend registration at the time and in the place indicated to them
- Pupils arriving for school must attend registration, or go to reception after 9.10am, to ensure that their arrival in school has been recorded.
- Afternoon registration will take place in period 4 by the classroom teacher.

The responsibility of parents/carers

It is important that parents work in partnership with the school to ensure that good attendance is maintained. Parents are asked to support the school by:

- Ensuring that their children attend regularly and arrive punctually
- Inform school on the first day of their child's absence by phone or via the school website no later than 9.30am
- Parents/carers must contact school every day throughout their child's absence.

Failure to contact school will result in the attendance co-ordinator contacting the number one contact by text/phone. If there is no response then the absence will be classed as unauthorised.

Late procedure for pupils

Registers close: morning 9.30 am and afternoon 2.00 pm.

Pupils arriving late for morning registration must report to reception and get a late mark (entered in the register). Late pupils must also fill in the late book. If they arrive after 9.30am then they will need an absence note.

Pupils arriving late for afternoon registration will be marked as late, on PARS, by the class teacher.

Pupils leaving during the school day

If pupils are required to leave school at some point in the day for an appointment (e.g. medical, external exam) parents must inform school either by telephone, email (absence@bowlandhigh.lancs.sch.uk), or by letter addressed to the attendance administrator. At the appropriate time, pupils must report to pupil services, wait to be collected by parents or other responsible persons and then sign out. School should be informed about any known appointment by the start of the school day.

Procedure for referral of pupils to Pastoral Heads

A percentage attendance data report of full year groups is collated weekly. PLT analyse the report. Parents of pupils with below 96% attendance will receive a concern letter generated by the attendance administrator. The pastoral leader will monitor the pupil for improvement.

Parents of pupils below 92% will receive a concern letter generated by the attendance administrator and will be invited into school to attend an attendance meeting with the pastoral leader.

Rewards

A prize draw will take place termly in the celebrating success assembly. Each pupil achieving 100% attendance will be entered into the draw with a chance of winning a high street voucher to the value of £25.

Pupils who have 100% attendance at the end of each year will receive a 100% attendance badge.

Requests for leave of absence

The head teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

*Please see appendix 1.

Attendance Contract

Where a pupil's attendance is becoming a concern and has been highlighted as such without an acceptable improvement, parents may be asked to agree an attendance or parenting contract with the pupil's pastoral leader. This sets out things that both the school and parents will do to tackle the issue of the pupil's poor attendance. If there is no improvement as a result of this contract the school may be forced to consider issuing a penalty notice. Please note that as well as attendance contracts a variety of other strategies may be used to have an impact on persistent absence;

- Attendance packages
- Home visits
- Pupil support
- Parent/Carer support
- Family support
- External agency support

Penalty Notices

Refer to Appendix 2

Monitoring and evaluation:

The effectiveness of the policy will be assessed by:

- regular scrutiny of attendance data and annual targets for overall attendance levels to be evaluated by the SLT and governing body on an annual basis
- PLT – weekly scrutiny of attendance data
- annual reviews by the pastoral leaders of the impact of strategies on pupils' attendance

Equality Audit: Attached

Author: H Kellow

Approved by: _____ on behalf of governing body in November 2017

Date for review: December 2018

Initial assessment of policy for compliance with 2010 Equality Act

1. What policy/area of work is being considered?

Whole school attendance for learning

2. Upon whom will this impact?

All pupils at Bowland High and their parents/carers

3. How would the work impact upon groups?

	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact
Minority ethnic groups		X	
Gender		X	
Disability		X	
Religion, Faith or belief		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	
Age <small>(N/A to pre-school and school children)</small>		X	
Socio-economic		X	

4. Does data inform this work, research and/or consultation, and has it been broken down by the equality strands?

	NO	YES	Uncertain
Minority ethnic groups	X		
Gender	X		
Disability	X		
Religion, Faith or belief	X		
Sexual Orientation	X		
Transgender	X		
Age	X		
Socio-economic	X		

Does the initial screening highlight potential issues that may be illegal? **YES / NO**

Further comments:-

Do you consider that a full Equality Impact Assessment is required? **YES / NO**

Initial screening carried out by H. Kellow

Signed H Kellow Date 29/11/2017

Comment by Headteacher:

Date.....

How to make a request for authorised leave of absence

The headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence should be submitted on the standard application form at least one month in advance of the start date of the absence. Forms are available from the attendance administrator, Mrs Armitage, or on the school website.

All sections of the form should be completed, with the date of the child's return to school clearly entered, only then will the school be able to consider the request.

Even where there are exceptional circumstances parents should be aware that we will be reluctant to authorise leave of absence in the following circumstances:

- The first half term of any school year
- Pupil's attendance is less than 95%
- Prior to and during exam weeks
- Anytime in Yr 9, Yr 10 and Yr 11

Removal from school roll and fixed penalty notices

If your child fails to return by the agreed date, a referral will be made to the Attendance Co-ordinator. Depending on the circumstances of a late return, or a holiday taken without authorisation, it is possible that the school might issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.



APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

It is a legal requirement for parents/carers to obtain the permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school in order to take any leave in term time. Parents **do not** have an automatic right to take their child out of school for leave during term time and may be issued with a penalty notice (£60 -£120 per parent per child) if they do so without prior arrangement with the Headteacher. **Government legislation only allows the Headteacher to authorise such leave in exceptional circumstances.**

To apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school at least **ONE MONTH BEFORE** your intended leave date. Where school have concerns about the leave request the Headteacher or their representative will arrange to meet with you to discuss your application.

PARENT/CARER SECTION

Surname of child: First name:

Date of birth: Year group:

Surname of parent/carer:

Relationship to child:

Home address:

Postcode: Telephone number:

Reason for request:

Length of absence: Destination:
(no of school days)

Date of departure: Date due back in school:

Emergency telephone contact:

Parent/carer signature:

SCHOOL SECTION

Date application received: % Attendance:

Date of meeting with parents (if applicable): Leave of absence approved? Y N

Reasons for decision:

Headteacher signature:

APPENDIX 2

Information sheet - Penalty notices**Introduction**

From February 2004, the law gave the power to the children's Services Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absence from School is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts School routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to antisocial behaviour and youth crime.

What is a penalty notice?

Parents/carers commit an offence if the child fails to attend regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution.

A Penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the penalty means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

What is the cost?

Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

How are they issued?

Penalty notices will always be issued by post to your home and are issued to each parent individually in respect of each child.

When are they issued?

Bowland High considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where an unauthorised absence occurs, such as:

- Truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- Unauthorised leave of absence
- Unwarranted delay of return from extended leave; and Persistent unauthorised late arrival at school Persistent unauthorised absence from school.

In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of five school days (10 sessions) unauthorised absence in a term or 10 school days unauthorised absence over 2 consecutive terms before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The school never takes such action lightly. It would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement action. However, school attendance is of such importance to all of us that the authority will use these powers if it is felt that it can improve a child's schooling.

Is a warning given?

In cases of unauthorised absence and persistent lateness, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued. This will tell you the extent of your child's absences and give you 15 school days in which to bring about an improvement. You might also be asked to agree to an attendance or parenting contract with the pupil's pastoral leader or key stage manager. In that time, your child should have no unauthorised absences from school.

In cases of an unauthorised leave of absence, warnings will be issued where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given. This means that in some cases, Penalty Notices may be issued without a warning.

Is there an appeal process

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning, parents/carers can make representations should they wish.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. Parents/carers need to be aware that payments of a Penalty Notice must be paid in full and cannot be paid in parts or by instalments.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period stated in the penalty notice, since payment of the penalty discharges liability from that period. However, it could be the case that a prosecution might be considered if there are further periods of poor attendance, which are not covered by the Notice, depending on the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that parents/carers work closely with the child's school and other agencies such as Children's Integrated Services.

What happens if I do not pay?

Parents/carers have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the notice in full, after which the authority is required under the legislation to commence proceedings in local magistrate's court for the original offence, which is failing to ensure the child's attendance at school regularly.

If this is proven you could be subject to a substantial fine. Other options such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences can be imposed depending upon the circumstances. The prosecution team will also ask the Court for costs towards their fees, which may also be imposed.