



Batley Multi Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

Batley Multi Academy Trust

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Version History

Version	Date	Outline Description	Revision Author
1	January 2024	New Trust-wide policy (replacing school-specific policies)	Trust Attendance Lead
2	April 2024	Review following the publication of the August 2024 guidance	Trust Attendance Lead
3	June 2024	Reviewed following publication of KCSIE 2024 to ensure compliance	Trust Attendance Lead

Aim

To support excellent levels of attendance and punctuality for all learners within the Batley Multi Academy Trust family of schools in line with our attendance strategy, 'Every Day Counts'.

Our Trust strategy focuses on early intervention and daily response to absence is underpinned by the following core values:

- Expect, Celebrate and Praise
- Monitor, Listen, understand and Early Intervention Facilitation of Support
- Formalisation of Support
- Enforcement

Key principles

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are expected, promoted and celebrated.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in our Trust to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with our behaviour policies (where appropriate).
- Some learners find it harder than others to attend school. Our Trust schools will work with all young people, parents/carers and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents/carers of learners have should be discussed. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents/carers and young people should contact the attendance or pastoral team in their school.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust

The Trust will:

- develop and maintain a whole Trust wide culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance.
- work with learners and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance.
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate.
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the Trust's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant obligations.

- share information and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance.
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data to identify young people or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future.
- ensure that all young people can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case.
- ensure that the Trust board and leadership teams work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy.
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including [Working together to improve school attendance](#).
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children December](#). Further information can be found in our [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education.
- regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- support all learners who are returning to education following long term absence.
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system.
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in the Trust to a designated senior leader.
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

Parents/Carers

We expect parents/carers to:

- ensure that their child(ren) arrives on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment.
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home, following the every day counts strategy.
- ensure that their child(ren) who are on a school roll within the Trust attend all sessions.

- follow the correct procedures for reporting the absence of their child for the school they attend within the Trust.
- follow the correct procedures for their child returning to the school following a period of absence.
- accompany their child to the main reception (if they are late) and ensure their child is appropriately signed in and their lateness explained to school (primary phase).
- avoid unnecessary absences.
- keep the school they attend within the Trust informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time.
- not take their child out of education for overseas visits during term time.
- inform the school they attend within the Trust in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent/carer with whom the child shall live with.
- observe and fulfil their **legal responsibilities** set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) and [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

Learners

We expect our learners to:

- attend school regularly and on time.
- be punctual to all lessons.
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive late.
- catch up on any work they miss if they are late (where appropriate).
- Understand that **Every Day Counts**.

Designated Attendance Lead

The Designated Attendance Lead ("DAL") for our Trust is Jenny Fox. The DAL will be responsible for the strategic approach to attendance within our Trust and will:

- offer a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes.
- oversee attendance and absence data analysis.
- alongside senior leaders in our schools, will ensure that all staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with Trust policies and procedures, 'Attendance is Everyone's Responsibility'.
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents/carers and learners, provide data and reports to support the work of the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will:

- recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust's ethos and policies.
- ensure the Trust's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help Trust leaders focus improvement efforts on the young people or cohorts who need it most.
- ensure Trust staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support young people or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance.
- share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools within the Trust.
- Receive reports from the DAL at regular intervals.
- have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the Trust and act as a central point for schools with attendance queries.

Registration

All schools within our Trust maintain an attendance register and use this to record each learner's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon. Please see Annex A for timings of the school day.

Learners who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where a learner arrives after the end of a registration session, they must follow the process in the "Late Arrival" section below.

The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education's guidance on attendance - [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61444/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf).

Where a learner attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the relevant behaviour policy and engage parents/carers where necessary.

Late Arrival

At primary phase, if a learner arrives at school after the relevant registration period has ended they must immediately go to the school office to sign in, accompanied by an adult who will provide a reason for the lateness.

At secondary phase, if a learner arrives at school after the relevant registration period has ended they must immediately go to the school office to sign in, and provide a reason for the lateness.

In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with relevant behaviour policy (where appropriate).

Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

Authorised absence - absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a young person to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence.

Unauthorised absence – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Reporting absence from a school within our Trust

When a learner is absent from school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform school by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the school know when they expect the learner to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact school on each day of absence.

On the day of return to school, parents/carers may also be required to provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence. Parents/carers must be aware of the relevant school's procedure here.

In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

If the reason for absence has not been reported, the school will follow up so that the reason can be established.

This is important for the following reasons:

- to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken when necessary.
- to identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- to identify the correct attendance code to use.

If a reason for absence cannot be obtained or communication with parent/carer has been unsuccessful, schools will continue to pursue the reason. This may involve:

- additional attempts at making contact over the telephone, or text, a home visit, a letter home and in some cases involvement from Kirklees Education Safeguarding services or the Police.

Appointments

Medical, dental and other essential appointments should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.

Where an appointment must take place during school time, the learner should attend school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to the school.

For the time absent from the school to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter must be provided.

Leave of absence (including term time leave)

Parents/carers should make every effort to avoid taking their children out of education during term time. The school will only authorise a leave of absence during term time only where there are exceptional circumstances.

To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Headteacher and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave. Forms are available from the school office.

Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Headteacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:

- will be confirmed in writing
- is solely at the Headteacher's discretion and
- is final.

Where permission is granted, the Headteacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

Extended Absence

A learner may also be removed from a school roll when a period of absence has not been authorised and is still taken, or when a period of absence exceeds the authorised time scale.

Our Trust will follow the following procedures:

1. On discovering leave of absence has been taken, schools will liaise with any contacts listed on the school system and liaise with any siblings' schools to discover more information.
2. Home visits to be carried out on 3 occasions.
3. After no contact either via text, telephone, email and a 3rd home visit has been carried out, attendance teams will write to parents/carers advising that, if no contact is made and the learner has not returned to school within 20 (school) days, and the school and local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the learner is, their child will be removed from roll on the 21st day and referred to Children Missing in Education (CME).
4. Schools will write to parents/carers stating the date of deletion, reason for deletion and procedures to follow to enrol a child at a school on return from leave of absence.
5. Schools will liaise with the LA in accordance with recent guidance.
6. Delete from school roll on the 21st day and refer to CME on the same day. Please note: under certain circumstances, where a learner is taken off roll, a penalty notice may still be issued, in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Religious Observance

We recognise that young people of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time, and;
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the young person belongs

the absence from the school will be authorised.

We ask that parents/carers notify the school attendance officer by writing in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

All schools within our Trust will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to improve a learner or groups of young people who need it most. In doing so, our schools with the support of the DAL, will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify learners at risk of poor attendance.
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders.
- identify learners and their families who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner.
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data to identify patterns and trends.
- benchmark Trust attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level.
- monitor the impact of Trust strategies and actions to improve attendance for particular learners and particular groups.
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups.
- hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of learners who the school/Trust and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable.

Our procedures for managing unexplained absences or where a learner's absence becomes a concern all schools within the Trust will follow a staged approach, seeking to work with parents/carers at every stage. This may include letters highlighting attendance below 95% (stage 1) and a further letter if attendance drops below 90% (stage 2). Parents/carers will be invited in to meet to discuss these concerns and how attendance can be improved, which may include a school attendance contract.

Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence.
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival.
- persistent truancy or lateness

We will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality because Every Day Counts.

Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the school's behaviour policy (where appropriate).

Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental/carer co-operation and support to urgently address these cases.

Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.

Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the school and Trust team will signpost and support access to any additional services.

Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine (£80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, where a second fine for the same child within any three year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160).

This is paid directly to the local authority.

When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- section 6 of the Department for Education's guidance, [Working together to improve school attendance](#).
- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- a penalty notice request will also be considered following 10 consecutive school session absences, this can be split over weekends and school holiday periods.
- one - off instances of irregular attendance, such as leave of absence taken in term time without permission, or when a term-time leave of absence exceeds the agreed length.
- where an excluded learner is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £2,500 and you will receive a criminal record.

Repeated leave of absence may result in the matter being directly prosecuted in Kirklees Magistrates' court.

Annex A - the School Day timings

School Name	Morning - AM Registration	Afternoon - PM Registration	End of the school day
Manorfield Infant and Nursery School	Nursery - 8:30am Reception, Year 1 and 2 - 8:40am	Nursery and Reception - 12:30pm Year 1 and 2- 1:15pm	Nursery - 3:30pm Reception, Year 1 and 2- 3:10pm
Field Lane Junior, Infant and Nursery School	8:40am	Nursery - 12:10pm Early Years - 12:25pm KS1 - 12:40pm Lower KS2 - 12:55pm Upper KS2 - 1:00pm	3:10pm
Healey Junior, Infant and Nursery School	8:50am	1:15pm	3:15pm
Batley Grammar School Primary Phase	8:40am	1:05pm	3:10pm
Batley Grammar School Secondary Phase	8:50am	Year 7-10 - 12:50pm Year 11 - 1:20pm	3:20pm
Upper Batley High School	8:30am	1:20pm	3:00pm
Batley Girls' High School	8:25am	1:15pm	2:55pm