

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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*'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old,
they will not turn from it' Proverb 22:6*

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As part of our focus on diversity and inclusion, BDAT pledges that our policies will seek to promote equality, fairness, and respect for all staff and students. Our policies reflect the BDAT values of inclusion, compassion, aspiration, resilience, and excellence. By working closely with a range of stakeholders, such as our school, union, and HR colleagues, we have ensured that BDAT's policies do not unlawfully discriminate against anybody.

Attendance Policy Statement

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) regards the excellent attendance of children as integral to the success of the student and thus the success of their academies. For the purpose of this policy, the term Trust refers to BDAT.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that pupils and parents/carers understand the absolute importance of full attendance at the Academies.

Aims

- Each Academy within the BDAT Family is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all children and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.
- We will endeavour to provide an environment where all children feel valued and welcome.
- For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.
- Every opportunity will be used to convey to the children and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Academy attendance is subject to various Education laws and this attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.
- Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and local attendance targets.
- Each Academy will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.
- Each academy should ensure that their attendance policy and practice is aligned to DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full- time education suitable.

[a] To their age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes, the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Categorisation of Absence

Any child who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those children where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those children who are away from school for a reason that is deemed valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the Academy.

Note: children recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

Any questions over this definition should be referred to the Headteacher.

4. Education in Alternative Provision

Where a child is attending alternative provision whilst remaining on a BDAT Academy roll, the Academy Attendance Policy will be shared with the person responsible for attendance at the alternative provision/managed move. Non-attendance of any child will be reported to the person responsible at the 'home' Academy, where the child has not arrived within 30 minutes of the agreed start time. At this point, the '**home**' Academy absence procedure will be triggered.

Education during a Managed Move

Where a child is attending alternative provision whilst remaining on a BDAT Academy roll, the Academy attendance policy will be shared with the person responsible for attendance at the alternative provision/managed move. Non-attendance of any child will be reported to the person responsible at the 'home' Academy, where the child has not arrived within 30 minutes of the agreed start time. At this point, the '**host**' Academy absence procedure will be triggered.

5. Religious Observance

These days are authorised at the discretion of individual academies. Please see Appendix 3: Academy Procedures.

6. The Impact of Poor Attendance on Academic Progress

Attendance During One School Year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	54 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	114 Lessons
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	174 Lessons
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	228 Lessons
75%	48 Days	10 Weeks	288 Lessons
70%	57 Days	11.5 Weeks	342 Lessons
65%	67 Days	13.5 Weeks	402 Lessons

The above table depicts how many lessons are missed when your child is absent from school. The minimum expectation for all children over the academic year is 97%.

Dealing with Absence

The Trust takes its duty to safeguard the welfare of all its children seriously. Unexplained absences and a lack of contact from parents/carers may cause concern and lead to the involvement of other agencies such as social services as deemed appropriate by the lead professionals in the home academy.

Children who are late

Late to school is defined as children being late for registration. An 'L' will be applied to the register. If a child arrives after the close of registration, then an unauthorised absence code will be applied to the register. Please see further information in Appendix 2: Registration Codes.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any extended absence from the Academy will be counted as unauthorised and can lead to a fixed penalty notice. Any request for leave of absence needs to be put in writing to the school. Please see Appendix 1 for a Leave of Absence Request Form.

Leave of absence during term time is not permitted. The decision as to whether a penalty notice is submitted to parents is made by the school as it is at the Headteacher's discretion whether to issue a fine or not. If the Headteacher does decide to fine, then a 'Penalty Notice Request' is sent by the school to the LA who then act on the instruction issued by the school. For further information on this, please see Appendix 5 which looks at the LA's approach to this in more depth.

Persistent Absence (PA)

Any child who has an overall attendance of below 90% is considered to be in the Persistent Absence category.

The Academy will meet with children and families whose attendance causes concern. In situations of Persistent Absence, a parent/carer will be fined.

Frequent Absence

Academies are aware that frequent absence e.g. a day a week is a significant indicator of concern and will always be acted upon.

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Lead to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns, notifying Senior Leadership.

Provision of work during absence

Children who are off long term for serious or unavoidable reasons (e.g. medical), must be provided by the school with work to complete at home with the support of a parent/carer. This work can include resources from Oak National Academy, lessons that have been presented on Microsoft Teams in relation to the topic being studied, worksheets, etc. With the introduction of remote learning during the pandemic, this work may be assigned online. If children take a leave of absence during term time, they will be expected to take work home or catch up on this work upon their return.

Attendance Awards

The very best attendance is always encouraged. The vibrant and spirited life of the Academy, which drives a culture of opportunity, will motivate children to want to be at the Academy. Praise for excellent attendance is given, as are any rewards as appropriate.

Attendance Targets

The Academy will set attendance targets each year. These targets are monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to governors on a half-termly basis. Classes and individuals are monitored separately against this.

All Academies will have their own attendance policies or attendance leaflets, which provide parents with information about school specific attendance procedures.

Appendix One: Leave of Absence Request Form

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Name of School

Date of Request

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. Bradford Council expects all parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Absences due to holidays, taken during term time can seriously impact on a pupil's academic attainment. Bradford Council's policy is to only grant leave of absence in the most exceptional circumstances. If permission is given for Leave of Absence the Headteacher will determine the number of days of absence.

Taking 'Leave of Absence' without the schools permission could result in you being issued with a Penalty Notice fine of £60. Penalty Notices are issued, per parent per child.

Where permission has been given for 'Leave of Absence', if you fail to return your child within 10 schools days of the agreed return date, your child may be removed from the school roll.

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school at least two weeks before the intended departure.

Thank you.

PARENTS SECTION

Surname of child		First name	
Date of birth		Class	
Surname of parent/guardian		First name of parent/guardian	
Home address of child			
Address where child will be staying during their leave of absence			
Telephone number			
Reason for absence			
Length of absence applied for (number of school days)		Destination	
Date of departure		Date due back in school	

Emergency telephone contact in the Bradford district		Emergency telephone contact abroad	
Parent's/guardian's signature			Date

SCHOOLS SECTION

Date of meeting with parent/s		Headteacher's signature		Date
Leave of Absence	Approved for		School days	
	Not approved for		School days	
Reason for refusing Leave of Absence				

Please Retain for School Records

In the event of the child not returning within 10 schools days of the agreed return date and where no satisfactory explanation has been provided for the non-return, the child can be removed from the school register. A Children Missing Education referral should be made to the Education Social Work Service who will require a copy of this form. For further information please see Bradford Council Leave of Absence, Holidays in Term Time and Extended Leave of Absence – Guidance for Schools or Children Missing Education 'If A Child Goes Missing'.

Appendix Two: Registration Codes

Not all codes will result in a mark of attendance. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Entries in paper registers must be in ink.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
I	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix Three: Academy Procedures

Absence – exceptional circumstances.

- In all circumstances, it is the Headteacher and Governing Body who decide whether an absence is authorised or not. Approval of absence in term time is not, under any circumstances, an automatic right. Absence during term time should be discouraged at all times, but under exceptional circumstances it may be considered when:
 - a. It is related to exceptional circumstances (e.g. family bereavement).
 - b. That the granting of a request should be linked with an expectation of otherwise full attendance.
 - c. Only one period of up to 2 days absence in any academic year should be considered.
- Parents will be informed that any absence taken without permission will be unauthorised and that this could be used by the Local Authority to strengthen a case for Penalty Notice / Prosecution where overall attendance is unsatisfactory.
- Parents should not normally take pupils out of school. Each request for absence should be considered on its merits and should take account of:
 - a. the child's stage of education and progress to date;
 - b. the overall attendance pattern of the child;
 - c. the time of year of the proposed absence and its nature (for instance its apparent educational benefit).
 - d. Rare and exceptional circumstances relating to parent's employment and leave entitlement (Armed Forces etc)
- Should any parent of a child (either one who otherwise attends regularly or a child whose attendance is poor) decide to take leave without permission, it will be made clear that the school will not authorise the absence. A child with an attendance rate below 90% is categorised as Persistently Absent.
- Procedure for permission to request absence during term time – parents must contact the Headteacher. in writing giving reasons for absence with at least one month's notice.

Appendix Four: Key Links

School Attendance – Main guidance (in effect from September 2022)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf

Educational Setting Status Form

BDAT academies are asked to register to allow the DfE to analysis attendance at a national and local level. Registration is via: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/share-your-daily-school-attendance-data>.

Appendix Five – Bradford Schools Online and Penalty Notices

Bradford LA state that penalty notices are fines imposed as 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.

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 (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council) must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice.

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. Penalty notices can be used where the pupil'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.

Bradford's new Penalty Notice Code of Conduct can be downloaded here: [Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#)

To ensure compliance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, all schools must undertake the following:

School action prior to requesting the issuing of a Penalty Notice:

- The School's Governing Body has endorsed the operation of the penalty notice scheme;
- The School's Attendance Policy clearly explains the criteria and process for addressing poor attendance, and the expectation is that all children should attend every day that the school is open except for sickness, unavoidable causes, religious holidays, or absences authorised by the school. **Ultimately, no sessions of unauthorised absence are acceptable, and where an exception may apply, the parent may be asked for evidence to collaborate this.**
- The School has fully considered any extenuating circumstances and has established there are no justified causes for the absences;
- A written notice has been sent to parents informing them of the consideration to refer to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice;
- While the Head teacher can delegate the authority to a member of staff to make penalty notice requests on their behalf, all referrals must be authorised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that referrals are made in line with the code of conduct.
- It is good practice to ensure that parents are reminded on an annual basis of the school's policy on attendance, including the existence of Penalty Notices.

For further information on this, including stages and letters, please follow this link to Bradford Schools Online - [Penalty Notices - UPDATED 21st FEBRUARY 2022 | Bradford Schools Online](#)