

TRUST ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Approved by Board of Directors		12/11/2020	
Version	Date	Description	Revision author
1.0	September 2017	Created from the Systemised Approach Toolkit Theme: Attendance	SEM/DJH
2.0	July 2018	Updated to reflect systems in all schools across the Trust	AS-B
3.0	September 2019	Reviewed	AS-B
4.0	September 2020	Updated to reflect practice	KW

Trust Schools should have in place supporting documented procedures and systems to ensure they are legally compliant with national guidelines.

Trust Principles on Improving Pupil Attendance and Punctuality

Core Principles

Beckfoot Trust schools develop a climate for learning where pupils make rapid progress, enjoy learning and believe anything is possible. Our schools embed a culture where pupils and learners arrive on time and attend every day, are active in their learning, independent and resilient to challenge and change which is shared and supported by our parent body. The school creates the climate that allows learning to flourish, pupils feel safe and they are rewarded for excellent attendance and positive behaviour.

Outstanding attendance is everyone's responsibility

The Beckfoot Trust is committed to providing a quality education for all our pupils and ensuring that learners and their families understand the importance of punctuality and full attendance at school. Beckfoot Trust schools will work relentlessly to ensure learners are in school as much as possible, working in partnership with parents/carers and partner agencies to identify and remove any obstacles or barriers that interfere with high attendance in a prompt and timely manner. **For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school on time and every day.**

Schools will respond to this Trust Policy through the publication of their local attendance strategy.

Aims:

Our Trust schools will manage and improve attendance by:

- Ensuring that attendance and punctuality is a key strategic priority for the school;
- Setting high expectations for attendance; positively reinforcing full or improved attendance and intervening where attendance falls below 97%;
- Acting swiftly to reduce lateness, absence, and persistent absence, with a specific focus on immediate support for vulnerable learners;
- Working actively with learners and families in nursery and reception classes to emphasise the benefits of high attendance, to reinforce and instill good habits of attendance from the start of learners their educational journey;
- Engaging and involving families in a proactive and positive way to sustain high attendance and to support and challenge parents/carers where attendance falls below 97%;
- Ensuring every pupil of statutory school age has access to full time education;
- Ensuring that a clear and transparent process around the management of punctuality and attendance is agreed and adhered to. These should focus primarily on prevention and reward/celebration, an appropriate level of support and challenge focused specifically at groups and their level of attendance, with punitive measures, including legal action, being implemented as a last resort;
- Ensuring highly visible, regular and consistent communication of these expectations to pupils, families, teaching and associate staff, and governors, including the Trust Board.

Why Regular Attendance is so important?

Learning:

Learners' enjoyment of, and ability to participate fully in their education is of paramount importance to us as a Trust. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling. Regular absence seriously affects learners' learning and progress over time, leading to poorer outcomes, which can inhibit life chances and opportunities. Department for Education (2016) research shows a direct relationship between the attendance of learners and their outcomes at the end of primary school or secondary school: put simply, the more days learners go to school, the better they do. Research also shows us that schools that relentlessly pursue good attendance have better overall attainment and behaviour. Schools are more likely to be considered good or outstanding by Ofsted if they have high attendance.

Safeguarding:

Pupils may be at risk of harm if they are not in school regularly. Learners who are missing from school are at significant risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, underachieving, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. We will do everything we can to ensure our learners are safe.

Expected Practice

Every Beckfoot Trust School has an attendance procedure which adheres to the DfE statutory Guidance: '*School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.*' (July 2019)¹. This policy details the processes and procedures for improving attendance in school that are underpinned by core principles and aims of the Trust.

The headteacher ensures that:

- Learners and their families know their current level of attendance and how to improve it;
- Teachers and leaders teach and promote personal responsibility and positive attitudes to learning and have high expectations of punctuality and attendance of all learners;
- Leaders welcome learners into the school each morning;
- Highly visible systems and strategies are used by learners and staff to recognise, promote and celebrate high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Teaching and associate staff have the training, capacity and are readily available to support and challenge absences in school;
- Staff with responsibility for attendance and welfare are held to account for safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and rewards in their area of responsibility, including key groups: gender, ethnicity, SEND, Disadvantaged, Prior Attainment groups;
- Attendance and punctuality is reviewed and discussed regularly as part of the senior leadership team meetings;
- High and/or improved attendance and punctuality is celebrated regularly, at least every half term and families are informed.
- Attendance and punctuality is tracked and monitored consistently, following agreed procedures, and is provided to class teachers, tutors, learners and families.
- The importance of high attendance and punctuality is part of the assembly programme and is included in PSHE and the wider curriculum;
- There is rigorous tracking and monitoring of attendance and punctuality data to support evaluation of the impact of the school attendance strategy;
- There is a 'zero tolerance' approach to unauthorised absence in all cases, ensuring that all absences are followed up rigorously through first-day calling;
- Whole-school preventative strategies are implemented to ensure the highest attendance in school of all learners:
- There is in place personalised early outreach for pupils and families to develop proactive responses to specific obstacles or barriers to attendance that have an impact;
- There is communication and support parents to understand the difference between minor ailments and illnesses that warrant a day off;
- All requests for holidays in term-time are refused unless there are exceptional circumstances and that where parents choose to take a child(ren) out of school without permission that penalty notices are issued;
- The school works strategically with other agencies such as education welfare officers, social services, the police and exploring other avenues, including the courts, where parents do not co-operate;
- Detailed records of learners who join and leave the school are kept, and pass this information to the relevant Local Authority (LA), usually Bradford, to ensure the LA are quickly aware of learners who might be at risk;
- They ensure staff attendance is high and lateness is avoided, to set a good example to pupils and show that the same rules apply to everyone in school.

¹ [DfE school attendance guidance](#)

Supporting the attendance of specific groups of pupils

Group	Schools will:
Children below compulsory school age (Nursery/Reception)	The families of children attending our schools' Early Years provision are encouraged to instil good attendance and punctuality habits from Day 1. Readiness to learn is predicated on positive routines, including arriving on time for school, wearing school uniform, etc.
Young people above compulsory school age (sixth form)	Young people attending our sixth forms are expected to attend all lessons and sessions punctually, whether on the school site or through remote learning. Attendance at tutorials and assemblies is also compulsory, regardless of how they are delivered.
Pupils on partial timetables	There is a high threshold for the use of partial timetables for our pupils and their use is reserved for meeting very specific needs, including phased returns from significant illness, protective circumstances, etc. Where a partial timetable is in place, the member of SLT with responsibility for attendance must meet with the family and agree the conditions. There must be regular review dates with the intention of transitioning the pupil to a full timetable as soon as possible.
Pupils accessing Wave 4: Complementary Curriculum	A number of vulnerable pupils in our schools will benefit from the Complementary Curriculum from 2019/20 onwards. Regular attendance and punctuality of these pupils is expected in line with this policy; however, the schools and trust will closely monitor the attendance of pupils benefitting from this provision, both individually and as a group, and seek external agencies' support as needed.
Pupils in Alternative Provision (B/D codes)	Protocols are in place to ensure the safety of pupils attending Alternative Provision, including maximising attendance and sharing of information relating to pupils' safety, attendance, absence and progress made in the provision. This includes maintained and independent alternative education providers.
Pupils attending other schools/provision (B/D codes)	Protocols are in place to ensure the safety of pupils attending other schools (including on Managed Moves), including maximising attendance and sharing of information relating to pupils' attendance, absence and progress whilst attending the school.
Children at Risk of Missing Education (CME)	Schools follow statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2020) and work closely with Bradford LA in relation to their shared responsibilities in relation to children's welfare and safety. LA guidance can be found here .
Elective Home Education (EHE)	We want our pupils to attend and enjoy their education in school and, as such, endeavour to ensure no pupils leave to be Electively Home Educated. Where no other solution to supporting the pupil in school can be found, the family must make their request in writing to the school, in line with the DfE Attendance guidance, and the school will delete the child from the admission register. LA guidance can be found here .

Statements on selected absence reasons

Illness (I code)	Parents must call on the first day of absence and on subsequent days. Schools should record as unauthorised absence if not satisfied on its authenticity - school must inform parents of intention. Acceptable medical evidence includes appointment cards, texts from GP surgery, etc.
Authorised leave of absence (C code)	Approval must be requested and provided in advance; in limited circumstances the school will accept a subsequent explanation. There needs to be a very clear rationale and narrative around the reasons a C code has been used, e.g. a plan in place with home visits if a child is not in the school building.

Religious Observances (R code)	This must be a day set apart for observance by the religious body to which parents belong. Examples: Sikh - Guru Nanak (Nov); Hindu - Diwali (Oct/Nov); Islam - Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha; Judaism - Passover (Apr); Buddhism - Vesak (Apr/May); Jehovah's Witnesses - Passover (Apr). LA guidance states up to three days annually for Eid; it is at the school's discretion to close in full or part.
Term time holidays (G code)	As a general rule, holidays during term time will not be authorised. Schools will issue penalty notices in line with the legislation. We work closely with the LA to ensure that unauthorised absence is minimised. We follow the Local Code of Conduct in relation to Penalty Notices for non-attendance and will request the LA issue a Penalty Notice if parents fail to ensure their child or children attends regularly. LA guidance can be found here .
Lateness (L/U codes)	Schools encourage children to attend on time from their first day in school; punctuality is an important component of <i>Readiness to Learn</i> and persistent lateness interrupts the education of all children in the class. Where lateness is persistent and does not improve, the Local Code of Conduct allows the school to pursue a Penalty Notice for this reason.

Metrics

Impact is measured by:

The Trust collates, analyses and reports on attendance and persistent absence on a half-termly basis, by phase, school and group, including gender, Disadvantaged, SEND, prior attainment, ethnicity, etc. Performance against national benchmarks and the Trust target of 97% is monitored and the gaps are quantified. The Trust also engages with learners and their families, e.g. using surveys, to understand the obstacles and barriers to improving attendance.