



The Academy at
St James
Aspire, Achieve, Believe

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The Academy at St James

Attendance Policy



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Trust Policy Statement

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) regards the excellent attendance of children as integral to the success of the pupils 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 our schools.

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 pupils. 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.

Aims of the Policy

This policy is intended to outline the expectations, procedures and key staff in relation to attendance as well as the strategy and support in place to ensure pupils maximise their attendance at school.

We envisage that this policy will act as a 'user manual' for pupils, families and staff when it comes to promoting positive attendance at school and will keep it under annual review. We will use our stakeholder voice mechanisms (e.g. pupil surveys, parent questionnaires etc.) to ensure that feedback around this policy is taken on board when the policy is reviewed.

In line with the latest [DFE Guidance on Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#), our school is committed to working in collaboration to:

Expect - Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor - Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and Understand - When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate Support - Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise Support - Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce - Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

This policy will be published on The Academy at St James' website and will be recirculated to parents at the start of each academic year, as well as when it is updated at any other point.



Introduction

At The Academy at St James', our priorities are that our pupils are safe, healthy and successful, all of which are helped by attending school regularly. We believe that working in partnership with families is the best way to maximise attendance at school in order to achieve these priorities. Our aim is for The Academy St James to be a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

We know that regular attendance at school is vitally important in helping pupils to reach their academic potential, to help them grow socially and emotionally, and to develop a range of life skills which will support them as they transition to secondary school.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular school attendance and educational progress and achievement. Children who frequently miss school often fall behind and, ultimately, it has an adverse effect on a child's academic achievement. Children and young people who regularly miss school may also feel more socially isolated as a result. Consistency in attendance is more than a routine; it is a lifeline that connects a child to a world of possibilities. Think about it – each day presents a chance to learn something new, to engage in discussions that spark creativity, and to build skills that will shape a future.

When it comes to school attendance, it is easy to think that 90% attendance is at a positive level, but the reality is that this is equivalent to one day off school per fortnight or 95 hours of learning missed across a year. Children who have less than 90% attendance are regarded as 'persistent absentees' from school by government standards.

Attendance %	School Days Missed in a Year	Hours of Learning Missed in a Year
100	0	0
95	9.5	50
90	19	100
85	28.5	150
80	38	200
50	95	500

It is our expectation that our pupils should only miss school when it is necessary and should aim for a minimum of 95% attendance over the course of each year. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Strong school attendance for every child is in everyone's best interests, and it is the responsibility of us all. We are determined to work collaboratively with pupils and their families to find the most supportive routes to make this happen.



Key Staff

This section of the policy details key staff and their responsibilities in relation to different aspects of the attendance policy.

Staff Member	Job Title	Role
Josiah Sulc – Office@stjames.bdat-academies.org	Attendance Governor	To ensure that the governing body have an accurate view of attendance within school, support escalation procedures where needed and provide an appropriate level of challenge to school leaders to ensure that the attendance strategy is effective.
Ruth Thompson – Ruth.Thompson@stjames.bdat-academies.org.uk	Head Teacher	To ensure that there is a strong culture of promoting excellent attendance and a strategy which is led effectively by the senior leader responsible in this area.
Rebecca Oxley Rebecca.oxley@stjames.bdat-academies.org.uk	Attendance Champion	Strategic leadership of whole school attendance strategy including policy development, staff training and data analysis. Operational leadership of attendance including direct work with families, monitoring registers, home visits and liaison with Education Welfare around any legal proceedings/fixed penalty notices
Rebecca Oxley Rebecca.oxley@stjames.bdat-academies.org.uk	Safeguarding Lead	Strategic leadership of whole school attendance strategy including policy development, staff training and data analysis.

How Parents can Support their Child's Attendance at School

This section of the policy provides advice and guidance to parents as to how they can support their children in ensuring excellent attendance at school.

Excellent attendance at school is the part of their child's education that parents have the most impact upon. This is why [Parental Responsibility Measures](#) are clear that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly. Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act also states that:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence".



The following are some ways in which parents can support their child's attendance:

- Be aware of their legal responsibilities in ensuring their child attends school regularly.
- Ensure that their child arrives to school punctually every day.
- Reinforce to their children the importance of education and how attending regularly leads to higher achievement.
- Contact school in a timely manner (before 9.15am) if their child is going to be absent that day.
- Ensure that any medical appointments are booked outside of school hours wherever possible – if appointments are avoidable – school is informed, and proof is provided
- Ensure that any leave of absence request is only made in the most exceptional of circumstances.
- Support their child's attendance (and therefore achievement) by not taking holidays during term time.
- Notify school immediately if there are any changes to details of named contacts for their child.
- Work in partnership with school staff to support any improvement plans for their child's attendance.
- Support the school with any procedures that are implemented as a result in their child's attendance being lower than expected

Daily Attendance Routines

The timings of the school day are outlined below:

Period	Time
Doors Open	8:40 – 8:55
Registration	8:55 – 9:00
KS1 Break	10:45-11:00
KS2 Break	11:00 – 11:15
KS1 Lunch	12:15 – 13:00
KS2 Lunch	12:30 – 13:15
Home Time	15:15

The Academy at St James is open to pupils from 8.40am and they will be welcomed by staff on the gate and class doors to support them in being ready for the day.

We expect all pupils to be in school by 8.50am at the latest so that they have time to organise themselves. This will enable their school day to begin in a calm and positive manner rather than having to rush.

The school day begins within their classes where the official morning register is taken at 8.55am so it is vital that all pupils are punctual.



Registration is a key part of the day as the following occur during this time:

- Key information and messages are communicated to pupils around items such as lunches, trips etc.
- Pupils are supported with addressing any uniform or equipment issues to ensure that they are prepared for the school day.
- Key well-being and self-esteem work is undertaken, alongside Zones of Regulation, helping children to feel settled and ready to learn.

The official morning register closes at 9.00am. Pupils arriving between 9.00am and 9.30am will be given a late register code (the 'L' mark). This does count as a present mark towards their attendance as they have arrived before the official closing time of the morning register.

Where a pupil arrives after 9.30am, they will be given an unauthorised late register code (the 'U' mark). This counts as an unauthorised absence mark towards their attendance as they have arrived after the official closing time of the morning register. Please note that we can refer to Bradford Council if unauthorised lates become persistent.

Pupils who are regularly late to school will be supported to understand the barriers to punctuality and strategies will be put in place to overcome these with their families. Where circumstances arise that may impact on a pupil's attendance or punctuality, we would encourage them or their parents to contact an appropriate member of staff in school (see Key Staff section).

The official afternoon register is taken at 1.00pm for KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2.

Daily Absence Procedures

This section of the policy outlines the procedures that parents should follow to report their child absent from school and the systems in place within school to follow this up.

For safeguarding reasons, it is vital that school and families work in partnership so that we know why each child is absent from school on any given occasion.

When your child is unable to attend school for whatever reason, parents / carers should inform us at the earliest opportunity, and certainly by 9.15am, by either:

- Phone call to school on 01274 777095 – leave a message on the voice mail
- Using SCHOOLSPIDER and leaving a message
- Message on school DOJO to Miss Oxley
- Email to Rebecca.oxley@stjames.bdat-academies.org

It is important that parents are specific in the reasons that their child is absent from school (e.g. 'vomiting' or 'fever' rather than 'unwell' or 'a bit under the weather') as this enables us to track patterns of absence more effectively with individuals and particular groups of pupils, therefore enabling more effective support (see section on Tracking and Monitoring of Attendance Data).

When parents are considering whether their child is too ill to attend school, they may wish to consult [Bradford Local Authority's Managing Absence due to Illness guidance](#) and NHS guidance on [Is my child too ill for school? – NHS](#)



This information will be processed by the attendance lead so that registers are accurately recorded for the day for any child who is absent from school (see section on Attendance Register Codes for more details).

After the official morning registers have been taken, we will add any late arrivals to these, so we have an accurate picture of which pupils are present in school.

This will enable us to quickly identify any pupils who are not in school and whose parents have not informed us of the reason. From here, the following actions will be taken in order to find out the reason, to ensure the family has sufficient support and/or to ensure the child's safety:

Day 1 of absence

- Parents/Carers contact school before 9.15am providing reason for absence.
- Where there is no contact, a SCHOOLSPIDER message and/or a phone call home is made and/or a DOJO message sent.
- If a reply is received and a reason for absence is given, the attendance record is updated accordingly.
- If no reply, a home visit may be undertaken by a member of staff. A letter will be left if no answer at the property, asking parent/carer to contact school ASAP. The visit will be logged on CPOMS, so all relevant staff are made aware.
- A home visit may be made on Day 1, if school staff are visiting addresses close by, regardless of whether contact has been made.

Day 2 of absence

- Initial steps as Day 1.
- If contact is made, through messages, with parent/carer they will be informed that if their child does not attend the following day, a home visit will be undertaken.
- A home visit may be made on Day 2, if school staff are visiting addresses close by, regardless of whether contact has been made. The visit will be logged on CPOMS, so all relevant staff are made aware.

Day 3+ of absence

- When a child reaches Day 3+ of absence, even if contact with parents/carers has been successful, a home visit will be carried out by a member of staff just to see how the child is and if we can support in any way. The visit will be logged on CPOMS, so all relevant staff are made aware.
- If no reply, a letter will be left, asking parent/carer to contact school so we can offer any support required.
- If Day 3+ is reached and contact with parent/carers has not taken place and Home Visits have not had an impact, further home visits are carried out, along with DOJO message/email sent to parents stating that a continued lack of contact with school may result in contact with the police and logging a welfare call. It will clearly state that parents are expected to contact school immediately.



These measures are taken to promote the safety and welfare of our pupils. It is vital that we have at least two contacts on the school system for every pupil so that we are able to do this effectively. Please call in at the office or email office@stjames.bdat-academies.org if you would like to add any additional contacts for your child.

We appreciate the support of parents in informing us in a timely manner of any absences of their children so that we can ensure that all our pupils are safe.

Long Term Absence

When a child is absent for a significant time due to illness, staff will set up a bespoke schedule of visits to support the child and family. Teachers will often be involved in these visits.

Please note:

All the above procedures are recorded and logged accordingly, so all relevant staff are aware and can add further actions to, where required.

Where there has been previous support/intervention/monitoring by school and/or social care, both announced and unannounced home visits may be undertaken sooner than the Day 1/2/3+ approach

Where a pupil is absent from school for ten consecutive days and no reason has been provided, this will result in a referral to Bradford Education Welfare for further support as they could be deemed as a Child Missing in Education according to local authority procedures.

Leave of Absence Requests

This section of the policy details the procedure in relation to leave of absence requests which will only be authorised in the most exceptional of circumstances.

The Academy at St James' term times and school holiday dates are published in advance and are published on the academy website in the **News** section – **Calendar**.

Training days are published as soon as we have agreed them with the local governing body but may be subject to change. Any changes will be communicated to parents at the earliest opportunity.

From 1 September 2013, a change to government laws means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for pupils to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. In line with government guidance and the Bradford District Attendance Charter, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence from school. Some examples may include compassionate leave, a religious observance or sporting/musical competitions. [DfE Guidance on Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) is clear that it does not consider, 'a need or desire for a holiday, or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance'. It also states that, 'Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.'



Parents/carers **MUST** make any such request at least three weeks in advance by completing the online form – Reception – Year 6 Appendix Two and/or Nursery and 2's provision Appendix THREE.

We will not employ a blanket approach to granting requests but will review each one individually, considering the particular circumstances of the request. Other factors will be taken into account including:

- The time of year the pupil will be absent (e.g. a Year 6 pupil missing SATs would be extremely detrimental to them)
- The previous attendance record of the pupil
- The number of previous requests for leave of absence

Parents will be notified of a decision by email /letter. Where a parental request has been refused, and parents continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

We reserve the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice Fine under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, as updated by the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#), where a child has ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a ten-week period.

Please note that from April 2023; in order to tackle unauthorised leave, Bradford Local Authority may consider legal action through the magistrates' court rather than issuing a penalty notice in cases where a continuous period of unauthorised leave of 20 school days or more is taken during term time, even if it spans across two half-terms. This is because Bradford has double the rate of absences due to unauthorised leave when compared to the national average.

Further information can be found in the 'Formalising Support' section of this policy or online here: [Penalty Notices - Absences taken after 17th August 2024 | Bradford Schools Online](#)

Attendance Register Codes

This section of the policy outlines the attendance codes that are used on the electronic attendance register. This is not a complete list and further information can be found in the '[DFE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance](#)' as updated by the [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\)\(England\) Regulations 2024](#).

The attendance register is a compulsory legal document which must be accurately recorded electronically by schools using the following attendance codes.

Present Codes

These are used when a pupil is present in school or is at an approved off-site educational activity. They include:

- / = Morning present mark
- \ = Afternoon present mark
- L = Arrived late but before registers close
- B = Present at an approved off-site educational activity (e.g. at alternative provision)
- D = Dual-registered and expected to attend their other provision
- K = Education provided by the local authority
- P = Approved sporting activity (e.g. a pupil who plays for the academy of a professional football club)
- V = Educational visit (e.g. where pupils are out on a school trip)



Authorised Absence Codes

These are used when a pupil is absent from school for an authorised reason. These marks count negatively against a pupil's attendance but are not included in any considerations of formal legal proceedings related to a pupil's absence.

They include:

- I = Absent due to illness
- M = Absent due to medical appointment (please try to make these outside of school hours wherever possible)
- C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances (e.g. to attend a funeral)
- C2 = Absence agreed in line with a temporary modified timetable
- E = Absent due to being issued with a suspension from school
- J1 = Leave of absence for purposes of attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
- R = Leave of absence due to religious observance. See [Bradford Local Authority guidance](#) for further details.
- Y = Unable to attend because of an unavoidable cause. Further information is available in [DFE Guidance](#). This code does not count as a possible attendance on the pupil's attendance record.

Unauthorised Absence Codes

These are used when a pupil is absent from school for an unauthorised reason. These marks count negatively against a pupil's attendance and may also inform any legal proceedings related to a pupil's absence (see section on Legal Proceedings for more details). They include:

- N = Absent without a reason being provided. As detailed above, we will make all efforts to contact parents to find out why their child is absent. If we are unable to do so, 'N' marks will be changed to 'O' marks (see below) after five working days.
- O = Absent from school without authorisation. Some examples that would fall into this category include:
 - No reason being provided for an absence.
 - The child is refusing to come to school.
 - Missing a full day for a medical appointment where attendance could have occurred before or after
 - Oversleeping/travel issues
 - School uniform not clean or not having the correct uniform
 - Birthday treats
 - Looking after younger siblings
 - Historic poor attendance – support plans in place – no proof provided
- G = Absent due to holiday in term time
- U = Arrival after the closing time of the official morning register – 9.30am

Monitoring and Tracking of Attendance Data

This section of the policy details how we track, monitor, share and analyse attendance data for individual pupils and cohorts of pupils.

In order for all stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, governors and external agencies) to work in partnership to ensure excellent attendance for pupils at The Academy at St James, it is important that we track the attendance of pupils and share this information.



This will be done by the following means:

- Pupils' attendance data will be shared on a regular basis with class teachers who will then share it with their class.
- Parents will also be informed about attendance in relation to their child individually and the school more widely through newsletters, DOJO, academic progress reports and letter.
- Attendance data by class will be shared with pupils in assembly on a weekly basis. This will feed into competitions (see Rewards and Incentives section).
- Attendance data of different cohorts will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team on a weekly basis. Examples of cohorts include year groups, boys and girls, pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and pupils eligible for free school meals. This will then enable leaders to plan specific intervention to support any cohorts whose attendance is below expected.
- Attendance data of different cohorts will also be shared with the whole staff on a weekly basis in briefings so that teachers are aware of which pupils may need extra support.
- Attendance data will be shared with Governors on a half-termly basis so they can fulfil their responsibilities in supporting and challenging senior leaders in relation to the attendance strategy and the impact it is having.
- Attendance data will be shared with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team on a termly basis. They will then provide support, advice, and guidance to school on how to make further improvements.
- Daily school attendance data will be shared with the Department for Education in line with the mandatory expectation stated within the statutory guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).
- In line with guidance, the local authority will be notified when any pupil misses fifteen school days during an academic year.
- We will consider local, regional, and national data to help give us context as to the attendance of students at The Academy at St James'.
- Where attendance interventions are implemented with pupils to help them improve their school attendance, we will use data to monitor the impact and assess the efficacy of the intervention.

This list may not be exhaustive, but it is intended to ensure that attendance remains at the front of everyone's minds so that we can work together in partnership to secure excellent attendance for all pupils.

Whole School Attendance Strategy

This section of the policy outlines the overall strategy in relation to supporting pupils to maintain excellent school attendance.

Our strategy is based on a tier model in line with best practice as recommended by the Department for Education, with the level of support dependent upon the level of attendance of the pupil.

Pupils whose attendance is below 90% are regarded as 'Persistently Absent Pupils' by the government and pupils whose attendance is below 50% are regarded as 'Severely Absent Pupils'. The framework below shows the different tiers of the attendance model and the impact this has on their overall attendance.



Our strategy is based on the following six pillars which underpin our approach:

Culture – we create a supportive school environment that fosters a sense of belonging for our pupils. We combine high-quality teaching with an excellent enrichment and personal development offer to promote engagement of our pupils.

Relationships – we prioritise building strong relationships with pupils and their families so that we can understand their circumstances, identify any barriers to attendance and put support in place to overcome them. We celebrate success and improvements in attendance.

People – we ensure that all staff are empowered to support pupils maintaining strong school attendance through clearly defined roles and responsibilities, regular attendance briefings and sharing of good practice.

Systems and Processes – clear attendance processes are undertaken on a daily basis, promoting consistency, high expectations and certainty for pupils and families. Absence is addressed quickly to ensure pupils are safe and to intervene at the earliest opportunity to overcome any barriers to attendance.

Communications – we ensure that pupils, families and staff receive clear and regular communication about the importance of excellent school attendance. Strong relationships mean that staff are confident to have supportive and challenging conversations with pupils and families about attendance improvement.

Data and Targeted Support – we track attendance data using a tier model in line with DfE best practice. We explore patterns in the data to understand the reasons behind attendance trends, using this knowledge to implement targeted evidence-based interventions to support those who need it.

Attendance Tier	Impact on Student
Tier 1 95% +	Pupils in Tier 1 miss very few days of school per year. They access the vast majority of learning opportunities available to them and have a strong chance of fulfilling their potential.
Tier 2 92-95%	Pupils in Tier 2 miss up to 15 days of school per year which is up to 75 hours of learning. They are at risk of underachievement as a result.
Tier 3 80%-92%	Pupils in Tier 3 miss between 16 and 38 days of school per year which is up to 190 hours of learning. Pupils with attendance less than 90% are deemed to be Persistent Absentees by the government. They are at significant risk of underachievement as a result.
Tier 4 50-80%	Pupils in Tier 4 miss up to 95 days of school per year. This is between one and three entire half-terms or up to 475 hours of learning. They are classed as Persistently Absent pupils by the government and are at extreme risk of underachievement.
Tier 5 Below 50%	Pupils in Tier 7 miss over 95 days of school per year. This is over 475 hours of learning. They are deemed to be Severely Absent pupils by the government and are at critical risk of underachievement.



In order to motivate and support pupils to maintain excellent attendance or improve their attendance, we will utilise a range of strategies which may include, but aren't limited to:

- Access to rewards in line with the behaviour policy - [The Academy at St James - Policies \(academystjames.com\)](https://www.academystjames.com)
- Positive communication home
- Mentoring
- Communication home so parents are aware of concerns and need to improve.
- Parental meetings
- Attendance panel meeting with Attendance Support Officer
- Referrals to external agencies (e.g. CAMHS, Education Welfare and Children's Social Care)

In addition to this whole school attendance strategy, The Academy at St James have a responsibility to abide by the guidance of the Bradford Local Authority Attendance Team. This attendance policy, therefore, works in conjunction with the Bradford Staged Intervention Procedures outlined in Appendices Four and Five.

Rewards and Incentives

This section of the policy outlines the ways that excellent attendance is promoted and incentivised at The Academy at St James.

In order to support pupils to maintain excellent attendance and encourage them to improve their attendance, it is important that there is a high profile and positive culture around school with rewards and incentives available to them. This will be achieved by:

- Positive attendance messages being shared in collective worship/assemblies on a weekly basis with individuals, form groups/classes and cohorts who have improved being celebrated.
- Positive attendance messages being shared throughout the day in lessons.
- Positive attendance messages being displayed throughout the school and in classrooms.
- Positive attendance messages being shared on DOJO and letters sent home.
- Attendance competitions between individuals, classes and other cohorts with rewards/privileges for the winners
- Recognition for pupils who maintain excellent attendance or make sustained improvement to their attendance through positive communication home, certificates and other rewards.
- Access to end of term celebration events contingent on maintaining excellent attendance or demonstrating significant sustained improvement.
- Promotion of excellent attendance at parent information and transition evenings

Punctuality

This section of the policy outlines the expectations of pupils in relation to their punctuality to school and throughout the school day.

Good punctuality on a morning is crucial. Lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class as it leaves teachers having to repeat instructions and breaks the flow of a lesson. It is, therefore, a collective responsibility of all parents to ensure their child/children are punctual every day.



We expect all pupils to be on school site by 8.40am at the latest so that they have time to organise themselves and get to class by 8.50am when the school day begins, and the morning register is taken. This will enable their school day to begin in a calm and positive manner rather than having to rush.

The official morning register closes at 8.55am. Pupils arriving between 9.00am and 9.30am will be given a late register code (the 'L' mark). This does count as a present mark towards their attendance as they have arrived before the official closing time of the morning register.

Where a pupil arrives after 9.30am, they will be given an unauthorised late register code (the 'U' mark). This counts as an absence mark towards their attendance as they have arrived after the official closing time of the morning register.

Pupils who are regularly late to school will be supported to understand the barriers to punctuality and strategies will be put in place to overcome these with their families. Where circumstances arise that may impact on a pupil's attendance or punctuality, we would encourage them or their parents to contact an appropriate member of staff in school (see Key Staff section).

Pupils with Medical Conditions, SEND and Social Workers

This section of the policy outlines the considerations that will be made for pupils with medical needs (including mental or physical ill health), Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and other vulnerabilities.

At The Academy at St James, we hold the same level of aspiration and high expectations for all of our pupils. The right to an education is the same for every student, regardless of their need, therefore the attendance ambition should also be the same. We recognise, however, that some pupils may have additional needs or vulnerabilities that impact upon their attendance at school.

For example, some pupils may have diagnosed medical conditions which require them to attend regular hospital appointments during school hours, or complex situations at home with which Children's Social Care are supporting.

Other pupils may experience mental health issues that impact on their attendance at school and we are mindful of the [DFE Summary of Responsibilities Where a Mental Health Issue is Affecting Attendance](#) when supporting these pupils.

In these circumstances, we will work together with families and other professionals involved in supporting the child to ensure that any necessary reasonable adjustments to this policy are made.

This could include referral to the [Bradford Medical Needs and Hospital Education Service](#) who are the local authority team responsible for providing education to children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs.



Formalising Support

This section of the policy outlines the more intense and formal support that will be used when informal measures have been tried without success.

We will work with Bradford Local Authority and other local agencies in a joint fashion to share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms).

We will have termly targeted support meetings with the local authority's attendance team to work together on the support that is needed for persistently and severely absent pupils. We will also share information from our registers with the local authority in order to support this. For example, under [DFE Guidance on Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) it is mandatory that schools inform the local authority where a pupil misses 15 school days within an academic year.

In their 2022 report, '[Securing Good Attendance and Tackling Persistent Absence](#)', Ofsted advise schools to take an approach where they, 'listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate'.

This means that where a pupil's attendance is an ongoing concern, we will work with families and make referrals to external agencies to secure support in removing barriers to attendance and establishing strong attendance routines. These include:

Attendance Contracts

A voluntary, but formal, agreement between parents and school aimed at outlining expectations and support relating to attendance improvement. These are not legally binding and cannot be agreed in a parent's absence but allow a more formal route to securing engagement and support. They are not a punitive tool and should always be considered before an education supervision order or prosecution.

Penalty Notices

The government have introduced a national framework for penalty notices from September 2024 via the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#). This aims at embedding a consistent support first approach where penalty notices are considered on a case-by-case basis.

The threshold is 10 sessions (equivalent to five days) of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period. Most commonly, penalty notices are issued for unauthorised term-time holidays. The new regulations state that the fine amount is:

- £160 per parent per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days) on the first occasion in a rolling three-year period
- An automatic £160 per parent per child on the second occasion in a rolling three-year period
- Direct to prosecution on the third occasion within a three-year period in recognition that penalty notices are not having an impact

The new regulations state that schools must consider issuing a penalty notice for any instance of a pupil having 10 unauthorised absence sessions within a 10-week period.



Where there are sporadic absences, however, it will be expected that schools are able to demonstrate that they have taken a support first approach before submitting a penalty notice request to the local authority. This is not the case for term-time holidays where support is not appropriate.

Education Supervision Order

Where a voluntary early help plan or attendance contract has not secured the desired improvement in attendance, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be issued by the Family or High Court as a formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution.

An ESO means that the court mandates the local authority to supervise a child's education for a period of time (initially a year with the option to extend it). The local authority leads this process although it is an expectation of schools that they will support as appropriate.

Under an ESO, the local authority may require parents to attend support meetings and access services such as counselling and parenting programmes. Where parents persistently fail to comply with directions given under an ESO, they may be guilty of an offence and face a fine of up to £1000.

Attendance Prosecution

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is a last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

The decision to prosecute a parent who has failed to ensure their child attends school regularly under the Education Act 1996 rests solely with the local authority, but school will be expected to provide evidence of how they have attempted to improve the pupil's attendance prior to the matter reaching this stage.

Depending on the severity of the case, consequences could be a fine of up to £1000, a fine of up to £2500 and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Parenting Order

This can be imposed by the court as a mandatory order on parents to attend guidance sessions and improve their child's attendance at school. Parental agreement is not required, and they may be utilised where a parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance.

Similarly to an Education Supervision Order, a breach or non-compliance with a Parenting Order could result in a fine of up to £1000.

When implementing more formal support, we will follow the staged intervention approach which is recommended by Bradford Local Authority. Further details of this can be found here:

[Bradford Local Authority Staged Intervention Process to Poor School Attendance](#)

These legal routes are a last resort once all other informal and formal support has been exhausted, however, we feel it is important to be open with parents in stating that we will not shy away from using them where necessary in order to help every pupil access their education.



Links with Guidance and Other Policies

The Academy at St James' Attendance Policy has due regard to the law on areas including:

- [DFE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance](#)
- [DFE Summary Table of Responsibilities to Improve School Attendance](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Children Missing Education](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School](#)
- [DFE Summary of Responsibilities Where a Mental Health Issue is Affecting Attendance](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Alternative Provision](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Is my child too ill for school? – NHS](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [The European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

This policy should also be read in line with the following - The Academy at St James' policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Intimate Care Plan Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- SEND Policy

These policies can be found at - [The Academy at St James - Policies \(academystjames.com\)](https://www.academystjames.com)



Appendix One:

DfE Attendance Codes

- Effective from 19th August 2024, there are some significant changes to register codes. Particular attention should be given to the new codes: **K, C1, C2, J1, Q, Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6, Y7**
- Attention should also be given to the withdrawal of codes: **Y, J, H**
- Further focus should be given to distinct differences between codes: **C, C1, C2**
- Finally, notice should be given to the clarity provided about the use of the **E** code.

Pupil is Physically Attending at School	
/	Present at School
\	/ = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late Arrival Before the Register is Closed <i>i.e. within 30 minutes of the school day starting (only used when registers are officially 'open')</i>

Approved Educational Activity

K	Attending Education Provision Arranged by the Local Authority <i>i.e. day 6th day provision following a Permanent Exclusion; section 19 provision; Alternative Provision commissioned by the Local Authority through an EHCP. Schools MUST record where the child is attending using a note on SIMS.</i>
V	Attending an Educational Visit or Trip <i>NB: this must be supervised by at least one member of staff from the setting and must have been arranged by (or on behalf of) the school</i>
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity <i>NB: the school must have approved the child's attendance at the activity and, by using this code is confirming that the activity is being supervised by a person that the school deems to be appropriately trained and qualified for the educational purpose of this activity – seek advice from the sport's national governing body if there are concerns. School must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the child whilst participating.</i>
W	Attending Work Experience <i>NB: this code cannot be used if the work experience is at the child's own school, or a section 19 provision used for the child. Attendance must be monitored, and school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the child whilst participating.</i>
B	Attending Any Other Approved Educational Activity <i>NB: this code cannot be used if a child is dual registered (see D code); it must be educational in nature; all due diligence must have been completed; attendance must be planned and approved; safeguarding arrangements must be in place. This code is to be used for taster days at other schools (or universities), courses at local colleges, unregistered AP arranged by the school (NOT that which has been arranged by the LA = see K code). Note this code cannot be used where a child is accessing remote education (i.e. EdClass), but school must keep a record of engagement with any remote education.</i>



Absent - Authorised Leave of Absence

C1	Leave of Absence for the Purpose of Participating in a Regulated Performance or Undertaking Regulated Employment Abroad <i>NB: where performing licence specifies dates, the school should record these dates as though they are applied for and granted – there is no need for a separate leave of absence request to the school. Where there are no specified dates, the school should receive a leave of absence request from parents.</i>
M	Leave of Absence for the Purpose of Attending a Medical or Dental Appointment <i>NB: Proactively remind parents about trying to make appointments outside of school time (note that those who leave after they have registered, even moments later, are not recorded as absent).</i>
J1	Leave of Absence for the Purpose of Attending an Interview for Employment or for Admission to Another Educational Institution <i>i.e. interview for post-16 placement; interview for university; interview for apprenticeship; interview for new educational placement</i>
S	Leave of Absence for the Purpose of Studying for a Public Examination <i>NB: children who are looked after or who have EHCPs should not routinely be offered study leave</i>
C2	Leave of Absence for a Compulsory School Age Pupil Subject to a Part-time Timetable <i>NB: modified timetables cannot be implemented for reasons linked to behaviour. Reductions must always be in the best interest of the child, temporary, agreed in advance and kept under regular review with parents and any other professionals working with the pupil. This code is not to be used for those accessing flexi-schooling arrangements.</i>
C	Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstance <i>NB: granted entirely at the school's discretion. Must be requested in advance, not retrospectively. Typically, a holiday will not be authorised as exceptional circumstances as per government guidance. Flexi-schooling planned home learning sessions are coded with this code.</i>

Absent – Other Authorised Reasons

T	Parent Travelling for Occupational Purposes <i>NB: school shouldn't unnecessarily request proof that travel is for occupational purposes – only where there is reasonable doubt. To support educational continuity, there is an expectation that, where practical, children who travel with their parents should be dual registered at a school in the area to which the occupational travel has taken the family; any such attendance would be coded accordingly using code D.</i>
R	Religious Observance <i>NB: only one day can be set aside for the use of code R – any further days must be requested as leaves of absence and, if authorised, a code C must be used.</i>



I	Illness (Not Medical or Dental Appointment) <i>i.e. where a child is unable to attend for physical or mental health related reasons – not medical appointments though. Where a school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the illness, evidence be requested to support the absence. A conversation with parents may be sufficient to provide this – it may be that other means are needed.</i>
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded and No Alternative Provision Made <i>NB: where alternative provision is made by the school, the appropriate code must be used. E is only to be used where the child is suspended or excluded with no provision in place. Typically, code K may be used in lieu of code E for pupils where 6th day provision is in place and attended after a permanent exclusion.</i>

Absent – Unauthorised Absence

G	Holiday Not Granted by the School <i>NB: the guidance states that leave cannot be granted retrospectively, even if a family presents mitigations after the holiday has taken place.</i>
N	Reason for Absence Not Yet Established <i>NB: this code must not remain on the record for more than 5 days after the session for which it is used. Schools will seek reasons for absence as a matter of urgency.</i>
O	Absent in Other or Unknown Circumstances <i>i.e. where no reason has been provided for the absence or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that should be recorded using an authorised absence code.</i>
U	Arrived in School After Registration Closed <i>NB: used for pupils who arrive after the register has closed.</i>

Not Counted as a Possible Attendance

D	Dual Registered at Another School <i>NB: used where a child is in attendance at an Ofsted registered setting where they are also on dual roll (i.e. a PRU, hospital school, off-site direction). Code D is to be used for all sessions where attendance is expected at the alternative setting. All absences must be documented and followed up but not recorded on the main roll register.</i>
X	Non-Compulsory School Age Pupil Not Required to Attend School <i>i.e. children in nursery and those in sixth form who are not required to have full time attendance. Where attendance is expected, appropriate absence codes to be used if the pupil does not attend. Times and days of attendance are to be clear to the parent with whom the child normally lives.</i>
Q	Unable to Attend the School Because of a Lack of Access Arrangements <i>NB: this code can only be used where access to school is arranged by the Local Authority through an EHCP and it is not available. It is not for any other sort of access arrangement deficit.</i>



Y1	Unable to Attend Due to Transport Normally Provided Not Being Available <i>NB: this is for circumstances where the Local Authority provides transport because of financial hardship or distance from the family home, not SEND related transport</i>
Y2	Unable to Attend Due to Widespread Disruption to Travel <i>NB: this is to be used where a local, national or international emergency has had an impact on travel (i.e. incident on the motorway, cancelled flights, no public transport owing to strikes and the child lives at least 2 miles (under age 8) or 3 miles (aged 8 or above) from school. If they live closer, they would be expected to walk to school.</i>
Y3	Unable to Attend Due to Part of the School Premises Being Closed <i>e.g. flooding in part of the school site leads to a partial closure of the school, building projects close part of the building. This can be on a planned or emergency basis.</i>
Y4	Unable to Attend Due to the Whole School Site Being Unexpectedly Closed <i>NB: this is to be used where closures are unexpected, i.e. adverse weather conditions. This must be marked during the session in question.</i>
Y5	Unable to Attend as Pupil is in Criminal Justice Detention <i>NB: for children remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or in police detention, or otherwise detained under a sentence of detention.</i>
Y6	Unable to Attend in Accordance with Public Health Guidance or Law <i>NB: this is about public health outbreaks – not 2 days of absence following a bout of sickness.</i>
Y7	Unable to Attend Because of Any Other Unavoidable Cause <i>NB: this must be in relation to the child and not their parent and the reason for the emergency must be documented in the register. The fact that a parent does all they can to secure their child's attendance does not in itself mean that a pupil has been prevented by an unavoidable cause.</i>

Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective Pupil Not on Admission Register <i>NB. This is typically used to allow school to setup registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administrative burdens.</i>
#	Planned Whole School Closure <i>NB: known and planned in advance – days between terms; half-terms; bank holidays; up to 5 INSET days; closure of the whole school to be used as a polling station etc.</i>



Common Examples

	Scenario	Code
1	Student is at another mainstream school on an off-site direction	D
2	Student is at another school on a temporary behaviour placement off-site direction (up to 5 days)	B
3	Student is at an Ofsted Registered alternative education setting.	D
4	Student is at an unregistered alternative education setting.	B
5	Student is at unregistered alternative education setting that is arranged by the Local Authority rather than school	K
6	Student is accessing remote learning through an online learning platform.	C
7	Student is being home tutored – arranged by Local Authority	K
8	Student is permanently excluded – first five days of exclusion	E
9	Student is permanently excluded – sixth day of exclusion onwards	K
10	Student cannot attend as the home to school transport service through their EHCP is not available	Q
11	Student cannot attend as their local authority transport provided for child protection reasons is not running	Y1
12	Students cannot attend as the buses are not running in their area and their walking route to school is over 2 miles (under age 8) or 3 miles (age 8 and above)	Y1
13	Student cannot attend as the snow is too deep / dangerous to get to school	Y2
14	School closes due to snow	Y4
15	Certain year groups are sent home before afternoon registration or are not able to attend school, as a gas leak (for example) means some classrooms are not useable.	Y3
16	The whole school is sent home before afternoon registration or are not able to attend school, as a gas leak (for example) means classrooms are not useable.	Y4
17	Student off school as they have the spent night in a police cell and are still at the police station	Y5
18	Student is having a haircut, doesn't have clean uniform, parent calls to say they are collecting their child early as they need to be somewhere, pupil truants off-site etc.	O
19	Admission meeting at another school due to in-year transfer or off-site direction	J1
20	Student is filming for a TV programme, has a license from the LA, and information has been received from the production company	C1
21	Student is on a temporary modified timetable to support Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and is not scheduled to be in school as part of this arrangement	C2
22	Student is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body of the faith they belong to	R
23	Student is absent for an additional day after the one set aside for religious observance by the religious body, as the family are having an extended celebration	C or O
24	Student represents England in Gymnastics and is competing in an international competition	P



Appendix Two: Application for Leave of Absence from THE ACADEMY AT ST JAMES' (Reception – Year 6)

Bradford Council have informed us that Reception - Year 6 are now going paperless for Leave of Absence Forms – If you would like your child to take leave of absence you **MUST** complete the form by following the link or scanning the QR code. ""s and Nursery children can complete a paper copy - which can be found in the school's main office.

Leave of Absence E-Form for Academy at St James -

The link to the new e-form is here: <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/LOAForm>

A QR code for the e-form is below -



Draft - due to be formally approved on 6/10/2026



Appendix Three: Application for Leave of Absence from THE ACADEMY AT ST JAMES' (2's and Nursery Settings)

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 authorised absence.

Taking 'Leave of Absence' without the school's permission could result in you being issued with a Penalty Notice fine of £80. 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 school 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.

PARENT SECTION

Surname of child		First name of child	
Date of birth		Class	
Surname of parent/guardian		First name of parent/guardian	
Address of child			
Postcode		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

SCHOOL SECTION

Date of meeting with parent/s		Headteacher's Signature		Date
Leave of Absence	Approved	Yes / No		
Reason for refusing Leave of Absence				

Please Retain for School Records

In the event of the child not returning within 10 school days of the agreed return date and no satisfactory explanation has been provided for the none return; the child can be removed from the school register. A Children Missing Education referral should be made to the CME Team 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 Four: THE ACADEMY AT ST JAMES' Absconding Procedures

At The Academy at St James, we actively work to provide a secure, safe environment where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community.

Role and Responsibilities

- a) The Head Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for all decisions made when a child absconds from school.
- b) All staff are responsible for caring for the child (until the child leaves the premises). They will be responsible for seeking additional help if this is felt necessary.
- c) Parents/carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school. They are responsible for encouraging their children to keep to all school procedures and policies.
- d) Once school has informed parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with the subsequent procedures and actions. This includes coming to school to help secure the safety of the child or working with the school to agree subsequent actions.

Procedures

At The Academy at St James, we actively work to provide a secure, safe environment where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community.

1. The member of staff who identifies the pupil as missing informs Head Teacher/member of SLT/Designated Safeguarding Lead/Main Office.
2. The Head Teacher/member of SLT/Safeguarding Team organises an initial search of the school buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
3. If the pupil is not found, then all available staff will complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
4. If the pupil is still not found, consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff knowledge of the child, the levels of risk, any active risk assessment and on what action is in the child's best interests.
5. If the pupil has still not been located and the school building and surrounding area has been fully checked, a member of staff will immediately contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation as well as phone the Police.
6. Any staff who leave school grounds will take a mobile phone to maintain contact with school. Where possible, staff who leave the site will be accompanied by another member of staff.
7. Once a pupil has been found, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
8. Parents and the Police (if necessary) will be updated and CPOMS will be used to make a record of the incident.



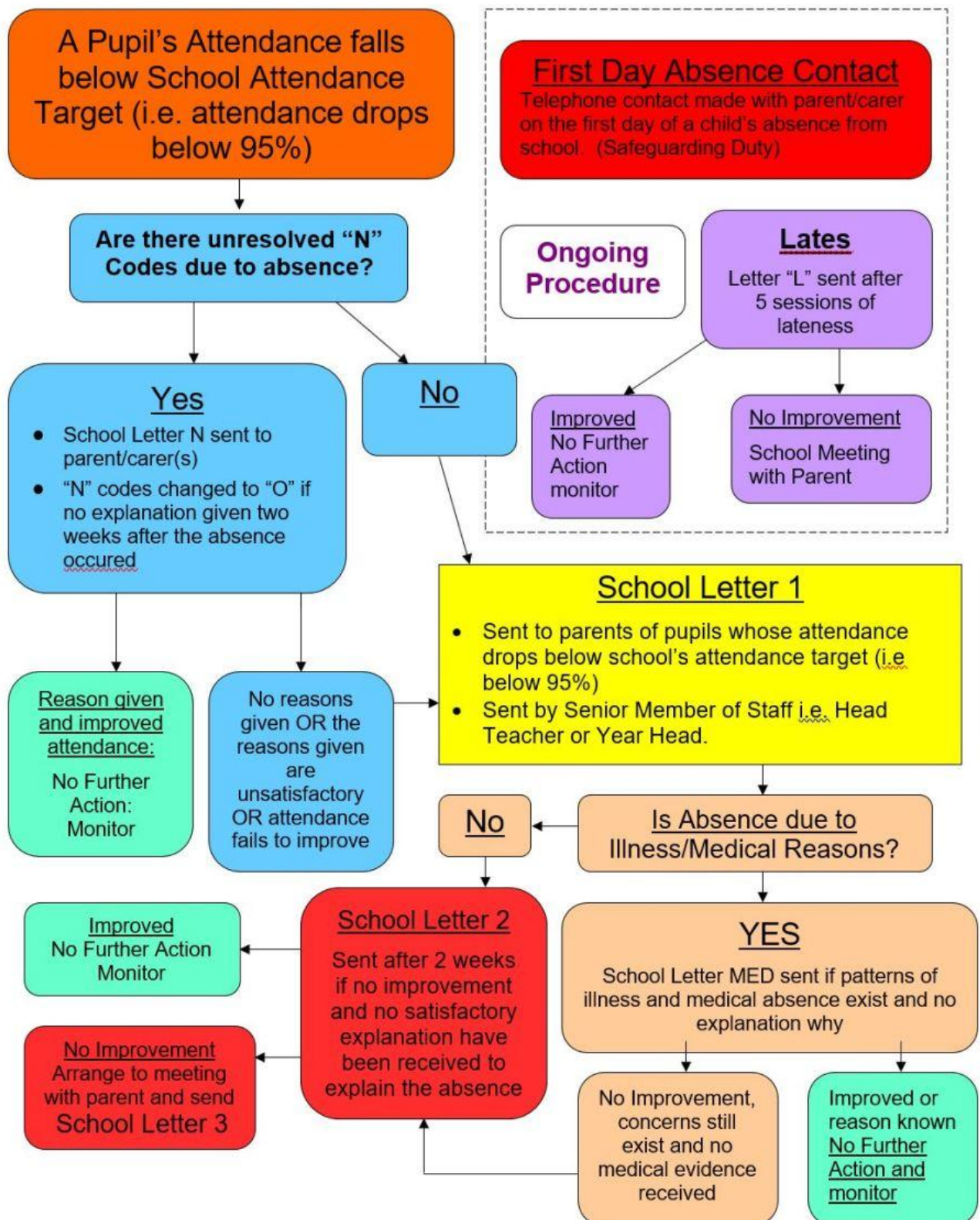
Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Staff will follow the pupil to the perimeter fence or gate and try to persuade the pupil to stay in school. De-escalation techniques will be attempted to support the pupil in returning to school. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm as possible and follow procedures.
2. If a pupil is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people, then staff may need to physically intervene by adhering to the Positive Handling Strategies as per Team Teach training.
3. Staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting them at risk (e.g. running into a busy road). Where they are not in danger, this means that it may be more appropriate to monitor the pupil from a distance or through the use of CCTV where available.
4. If the pupil has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and are no longer visible, then the lead member of staff will make a decision as to how to take matters further. This will consider the age of the pupil, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.
5. A member of staff must then contact the pupil's parents/carers immediately.
6. Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.
7. If the searching staff lose sight of or are concerned for the safety of the student or themselves, they must contact the school office giving current details of their location and a description of the pupil.
8. A member of staff would then call the police and report the situation.
9. Following an incident of this type, an Individual Pupil Risk Assessment (IPRA) will be put in place by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or SENDCO to support the child. This will be agreed with parents and shared with staff with the intention of reducing risk of reoccurrence. This may include the creation of a pupil specific 'grab bag' which contains first aid resources, pupil's contact details, school phone etc, if it is felt there is a chance of the child absconding again.



Appendix Five: Bradford Local Authority Attendance Staged Intervention Procedure – Stage 1

Stage One – School Attendance Staged Intervention Model

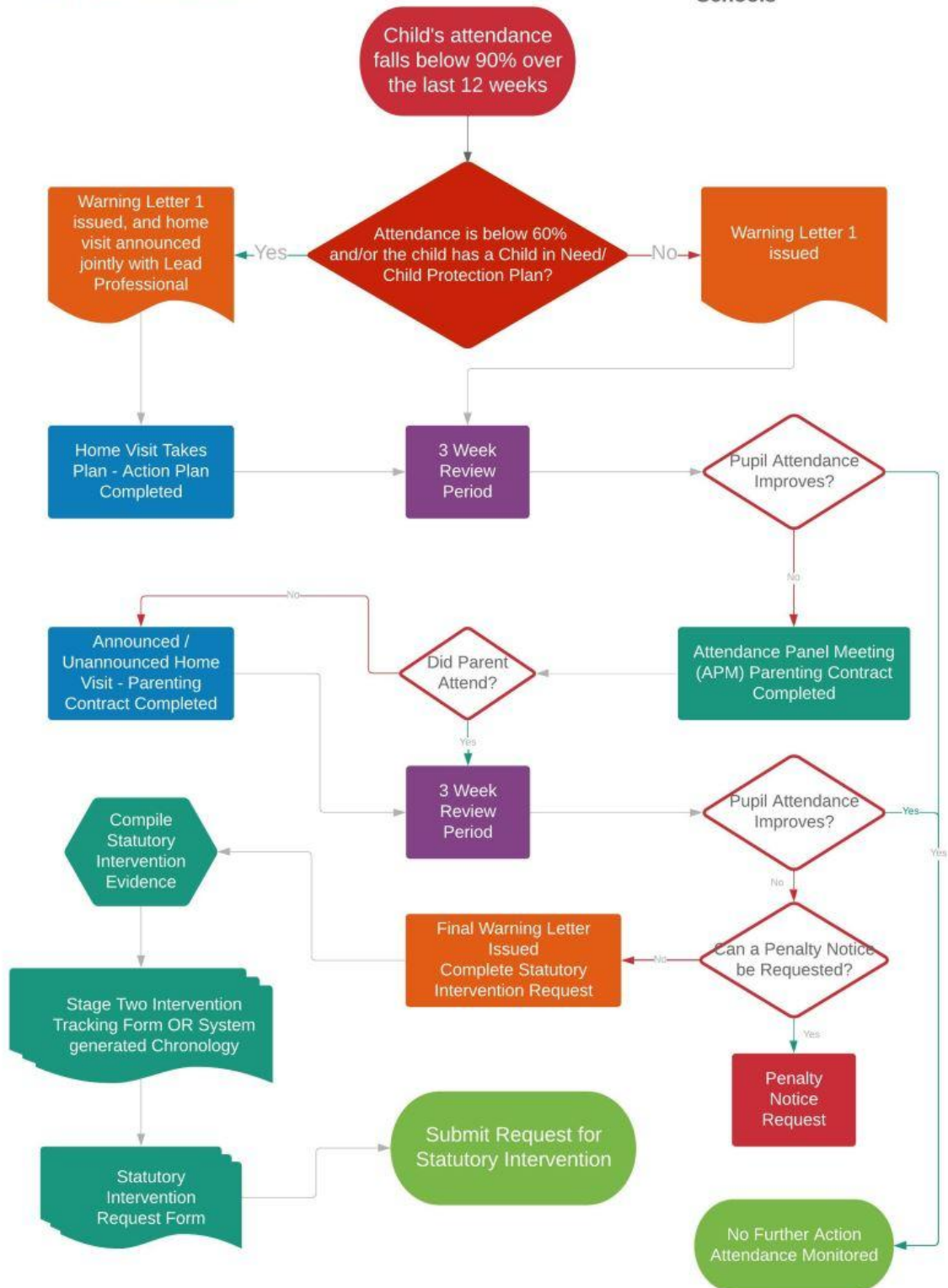




Appendix Six: Bradford Local Authority Attendance Staged Intervention Procedure – Stage 2



Education Safeguarding Team Stage Two Intervention Process: Schools





Appendix Seven: Bradford Attendance Charter



Bradford District Schools Attendance Charter

The Attendance Charter is a collaborative approach to promoting good attendance within schools across Bradford District, so that all children and young people can fulfil their potential. All those signing the charter agree to uphold a set of joint principles and to work together to implement the charter. Bradford Council has agreed to support the charter and work together with schools and settings to ensure a partnership approach to the charter's implementation. The charter will seek to strengthen support from key multi-agency partners and further support our shared approach to school attendance.

Our school agrees to:

1. Elect a senior leader, a Senior Attendance Champion responsible for implementing the attendance strategy, and elect and train a governor or trust leader responsible for overseeing attendance.
2. Ensure attendance staff are appropriately trained and that they participate in networking/development opportunities.
3. Have in place a clear attendance policy whose effectiveness is regularly monitored and reviewed by the senior leadership team and reported to governors or trust leaders.
4. Appoint a member of staff who is responsible for the day-to-day management of attendance across the school and liaising with appropriate safeguarding leads.
5. Implement a robust approach to track and monitor pupil attendance, so that action can be taken swiftly for students whose attendance is causing concern, and that patterns and themes in respect of student absence can be analysed and managed appropriately.
6. Offer an engaging curriculum and enrichment programme for all pupils, that inspires children to attend their school or setting every day.
7. Engage and involve parents/carers and the community in developing attendance approaches, particularly those parents whose children are most at risk of ongoing or persistent absence issues.
8. Engage and involve parents/carers and the community in the developing attendance approaches, particularly those parents whose children are most at risk of ongoing or persistent absence issues.
9. Commit to multi-agency working to address underlying issues facing families and communities, including a commitment to active engagement with the wider team around the child and whole-family approaches to supporting children and families with more complex or entrenched needs.
10. Share and implement best and emerging practice in respect of what is working to improve attendance for those children and families most at risk of persistent absence.
11. Review Bradford Schools Online guidance, taking note of the best practice recommendations around the Staged Intervention Approach to Poor Attendance, safeguarding pupils and when removing children from roll.



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Schools agree to also implement the following common practices:

- Take their attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (morning) and once during the second session (in the afternoon). They will record if the pupil is:
 - ✓ Present;
 - ✓ Attending an approved educational activity
 - ✓ Absent due to illness/medical appointment
 - ✓ Absent – unauthorised; or
 - ✓ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Contact the pupil's parents/carers on a pupil's first day of absence, to establish the reasons for absence and mark the attendance register accordingly. Then contact the pupil's parents/carers every day that there are subsequent unexplained absences.
- Close their register 30 minutes after the start of the school day. All pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked with the code U or with another absence code such as I or M.
- Positively engage with termly attendance support meetings with Bradford Council, sharing information on the interventions attempted with persistently and severely absent children and engaging in discussions to agree appropriate actions.
- Headteachers across all Bradford District schools will not authorise any requests for leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers will also commit to communicate effectively with families in respect of planned absences, and withdrawal from learning which may then impact a pupil's term time attendance.
- Monitor patterns of late arrival amongst pupils. Those pupils who are persistently late (late more than once a week for a period of a month) will be contacted and a plan put in place to address this.
- Monitor and track the attendance of all pupils on weekly basis.
- Where pupils have a concerning decline in attendance, over one term and/or have had six sessions of absence (unauthorised and/or authorised absence over a three school week period), schools will contact parents/carers and will consider holding an attendance meeting to review their child's attendance with them and that will set clear targets for improvement.
- Liaise with schools where children from the same/linked families attend, so that there is a shared approach to promoting good attendance and in respect of sanctions for families whose attendance is a concern.
- Where a pupil has had two sickness absences in a half term or has a sickness absence of three consecutive days, and if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
- Follow the Bradford Staged Approach to Poor Attendance, ensuring families are offered support tailored to their needs, whilst ensuring legal intervention is requested swiftly when appropriate.
- Be aware of emerging issues that may impact children and their families (such as refugees and asylum seekers) and where additional support may be sought to support the school and the family.



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Appendix Eight: Summary of Policy Changes

The below table provides a summary of changes to this policy over time:

September 2024	
Page	Summary of Change
3	- Added reference that this policy will act as a user manual for 'promoting positive attendance' rather than just as a user manual. - Added in terminology of 'Expect', 'Monitor', 'Listen and Understand', 'Facilitate Support', 'Formalise Support' and 'Enforce' in line with latest DFE guidance.
4	Added table to demonstrate what attendance percentages mean in real terms of school days lost and learning hours lost.
5	Changed 'Senior Leader' to 'Attendance Champion' to bring terminology in line with latest DFE guidance which references all schools having a senior member of staff to fulfil this role.
7	Amended wording in paragraph on punctuality to school to focus more on supporting pupils and families to remove barriers rather than imposition of consequences.
8	Added in link to NHS guidance on whether a child is too ill to attend school to support parents
9	Added in reference to the Bradford Attendance Charter which makes clear that all schools in the district are committed to not authorising holidays in term time
10-11	- Added in the new 'K' code in line with latest version of guidance - Added in the new 'C1' and 'J1' codes and further details relating to the 'R' and 'Y' codes from the new DFE guidance
12	Made clear that attendance data will be shared with the Department for Education as this has been made mandatory under the new guidance
14	- Added in the same wording as used on P7 regarding punctuality so that the policy is consistent - Added in specific reference to pupils whose attendance may be impacted by mental health issues and associated DFE guidance.
15	Added further information about 'Attendance Contracts' in line with new guidance
16	- Added more information about penalty notices in line with the new national framework - Added more information about Education Supervision Orders in line with the new guidance - Added more information about Attendance Prosecution in line with the new guidance
17	Updated hyperlinks to all guidance and policies to ensure that they link to the latest versions
26-27	Added in the Bradford Attendance Charter
28	Added in a summary of policy changes
September 2025	
Page	Summary of Change
9	Added in quotes from DfE Attendance Guidance to make it explicit that the need or desire for a holiday or other recreational activity does not constitute an exceptional circumstance for a leave of absence. Also added in that leave of absence will not be granted for the purpose of a pupil taking part in protest activity during school hours.
10	Added clarity to the paragraph regarding extended unauthorised leave in term time to state that where the unauthorised leave is 20 school days or more, the local authority may proceed straight to prosecution through the magistrate's court rather than issuing a penalty notice.
11	Removed reference to medical evidence being required for pupils who are absent due to illness where their attendance is under 90%, as this is not in line with DfE Guidance which states that evidence should only be requested where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt as to the veracity of the illness.
Appendix 1	Reviewed and updated the descriptors for each attendance code to ensure that they were written appropriately for external stakeholders, as some of them were previously more aimed at school staff.
Appendix 5 and 6	Replaced with the latest versions of the Bradford Local Authority Staged Intervention process to poor school attendance



September 2026	
Page	Summary of Change
Throughout	Updated hyperlinks to latest versions of guidance/legislation
8	Added in hyperlink to Bradford Local Authority guidance on managing absence due to illness
9	Added in hyperlink to the Bradford Schools Leave of Absence Request online form
10	Added in wording to be clear that requests for leaves of absence for exceptional circumstances will not be granted on a blanket basis but will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances.
11	Added in hyperlink to Bradford Local Authority guidance on absences due to religious observance
12	Added in the DfE Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE) target as part of the approach to monitoring attendance data. Also added in Young Carers as a specific cohort in line with updated Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance.
12-13	Added in the six pillars of the BDAT Secondary Attendance strategy. These principles are strong practice generally and help to codify the work that already takes place in all schools.
13	Updated attendance bands to bring it into line with BDAT Attendance PowerBI Dashboard
16	Removed references to the regulations being 'new' given that they have now been in place for two years
Appendices	Removed copy of Leave of Absence Request Form for Reception – Yr 6 as this is now completed through the online link which has been added to Appendix 2

Draft - due to be formally approved on 6/11/2026