

Attendance Policy

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Date of next review	June 2029	Author	Local Authority/DfE
Type of policy	Non-Statutory	Approval	Head Teacher

This policy sets out statutory expectations and legal consequences in alignment with the Working Together to Improve School Attendance Framework and Local Authority Code of Conduct.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Boldon School recognises the importance of regular attendance maximising the benefit of any educational opportunity. Excellent attendance is a crucial part in supporting our students to learn effectively.

Boldon School aims to raise the achievement of all its students and to ensure that it meets the following aims through regular attendance:

- To be responsible, respectful and resilient learners
- To build friendships and adopt healthy lifestyles
- To ensure learners feel safe and adopt safe practices
- To ensure learners enjoy their education and reach their full potential
- To aid learners to prepare for their future economic wellbeing and make a positive contribution to the community

Boldon School recognises that attendance is a crucial factor in student success. It therefore aims to achieve significantly improved attendance levels and maintain at least a 96% attendance rate each year.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5 to 16 year olds) attend school regularly and on time. Ensuring regular attendance is essential; permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by law and may result in prosecution.

Boldon School will always seek to work collaboratively with families in order to support regular attendance.

Parents must provide accurate and up to date contact details, and notify the Main Office of any changes.

If you are struggling to get your child into school, contact their Year Leader and be open and honest about your concerns. We are here to help and support you and your child.

CATEGORISING ABSENCES

Each session (morning and afternoon) is recorded as present or absent and all absence must be accounted for.

When a student is unwell, parents/carers should contact the school before morning registration on the first day of absence. A call to the attendance team or a message via the class charts app must be made for each day of absence no later than 8.30am. When a student is absent due to illness or a medical appointment, evidence may be requested e.g. appointment card, letter, prescription, or screen shot of appointment.

If there is genuine doubt regarding the authenticity of the illness and/or medication, original medication packaging will be requested. The medication packaging must feature the official pharmacy dispensing label, clearly showing name and date of issue.

Parents/carers should ensure that every effort is made to make or arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

Important note - your child must attend school before and/or after an appointment, unless there are medical reasons why this cannot happen.

It is recognised that on occasion there are extenuating or compassionate reasons such as bereavement, to justify a leave of absence. These reasons will be considered carefully by the Head Teacher and communicated to parents/carers.

Unauthorised absences are recorded when permission can not be granted. This includes arriving after registers close (code U), unexplained absences and term time holidays.

HOLIDAYS

Boldon School **do not** authorise term time holidays.

Absence during term time can have a significant impact on a student's learning and continuity of education.

Parents/carers are strongly advised to not book family holidays during term time. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw students from school for a holiday. Any request for leave of absence must be made in writing at least 6 weeks in advance, using the schools Leave of Absence request form. Forms can be collected from the Main Office or downloaded from the school website.

Penalty notices can now be issued for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period, even if those sessions are not consecutive. So, 10 individual days of unauthorised absence within this timeframe, may meet the criteria for a penalty notice. Evidence of illness may be requested for absence directly before or after a term time holiday if absences extend beyond the scheduled break. This absence can be unauthorised if it is believed to be a way of extending a holiday.

If a request is submitted late; on the day of absence, a day before the absence, or no request is submitted, the absence will automatically be recorded and unauthorised and a follow up letter will be issued upon the child's return to school. In these cases, a referral may be made to the Local Authority for statutory action which may include issuing a Penalty Notice or prosecution at the Magistrates Court.

PUNCTUALITY

Boldon School expects all students to arrive on time for their scheduled provision in order to access their full education. Late arrival is disruptive and can lead to students missing out on important work and information.

At Boldon School the students' day starts at 8:40am, students are expected to line up with their tutor group on the yard and be ready for learning at 8:45am. Morning registers close at 9.15am. Afternoon registration opens at 12.15pm and closes at 12.45pm.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed (30 minutes after registration) may lead to statutory action and Local Authority intervention.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES

1st Day of Absence

All students not seen at registration should be marked as an unexplained (N) absence.

An absence text / email will be initiated on each day of absence. If a reason for absence is not provided and there is no contact from the family, a call will be made by a member of the Pastoral Team to obtain a reason.

3rd Day of Continuous Absence

If no contact with family is made to obtain a reason for absence by the third day of absence, the school will call all contacts listed on the child's profile to raise concern and obtain information of student whereabouts. The Attendance Officer or a nominated member of staff will make a home visit.

Should there be no-one at home or no response, a calling card will be hand delivered, requesting urgent contact is made with School.

5th Day of Continuous Absence

If no contact with the family has been made for 5 consecutive days and no information was obtained following home visit(s), Safeguarding procedures will be implemented and could lead to a Police welfare check.

SAFEGUARDING

Boldon School has a duty to effectively safeguard all students attending School. Supporting regular attendance is part of this safeguarding duty. Poor attendance and unexplained absence can indicate a possible safeguarding concern including (but not limited to) physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, female genital mutilation (FGM), child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, substance misuse or child on child abuse.

Boldon School staff will always seek to work with families to minimise absence and ensure clear communication regarding any absence that might occur. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, these will be managed in accordance with Boldon School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Before any legal sanctions are considered, Boldon School are committed to providing support to students and families.

In order to improve attendance, we aim to work with external partners and families in order to treat the root cause of declining attendance. We will analyse attendance data and implement the following Attendance Phases through early identification and intervention.

- Monitor % bandings and those with attendance below 96%
- Send regular % attendance messages to parents/carers
- Speak to students to identify any barriers to attending school regularly
- Weekly Tutor monitoring and class discussions
- Attendance monitoring focus groups to improve attendance and aim to reduce the number of students persistently absent (below 90%)
- Concern and Medical Evidence letters to parents/carers
- Internal monitoring periods for those at risk of statutory action
- Parental meetings
- Internal support and external support
- Support Plan's completed with students and parents to address barriers and implement support

Please note - If attendance falls below 96%, a first letter of concern will be issued.

'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.' (Education Act 1996). From September 2015, Persistent absence has been defined by the Department for Education as anyone whose attendance has dropped to 90% or below.

If no sustained improvement has been made through the schools support strategies the details will be forwarded to the Attendance Monitoring Team at South Tyneside Local Authority (LA) who will make arrangements for statutory action.

If there has been sufficient improvement, the parent/carers will be informed by email or telephone call and internal monitoring will continue.

All Boldon School staff must enter each contact made with the parent/carers of the student as a record on CPOMS. This record will then be used as part of the evidence provided to South Tyneside LA in the event of a Penalty Notice being issued.

SEVERE ABSENCE

Severe absence is classified as those students missing 50% or more of school (Working together to improve attendance, 2024). A concerted effort will be made by all partners to prioritise support for these students in order to improve their attendance. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities and other appropriate education support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reason continues, it is likely to constitute neglect and be referred to South Tyneside Local Authority.

PENALTY NOTICES

The new National framework came into force on 19th August 2024, summarised below.

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Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance
The new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child	10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period	
Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example 2 siblings with unauthorised absence during term time may result in each parent being issued with one penalty notice per child.	Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.	
First Offence The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be: £360 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.	Second Offence (within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice) The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.	Third Offence (within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice) The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. This is a criminal offence and a parent may end up with a criminal record.

Under National regulations, a Penalty Notice may be issued where there are 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a 10 week period. These sessions do not need to be consecutive.

For example, 10 separate days of unauthorised absence within this period would meet the threshold for a penalty notice.

Where unauthorised absence continues, parents/carers may be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Anti-Radicalisation Policy

Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Exclusions Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy (Academies)

Remote Education Policy

Supporting Students in School with Medical Conditions Policy

ATTENDANCE CODES

On site code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended.
Off site code	Description
B	Attending any other Approved Educational Activity
C	Other Authorised exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of Absence - regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence - part-time timetable
D	Dual registration (attending another establishment)
E	Suspended or excluded without alternative provision
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
I	Illness (not medical/dental appointments)
J1	Leave of absence - Interview for employment or transfer
K	Attending Alternative provision arranged by the LA
M	Medical/Dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P	Participating in a sporting activity
Q	Unable to attend (lack of access arrangements)
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave for public examination

T	Travelling with parents for occupational purposes
U	Late (after registers close)
V	Attending an Educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience
X	Not required to attend - non- compulsory school age pupil
Y1	Unable to attend - normal transport not available
Y2	Unable to attend - widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend - unavoidable partial closure
Y4	Unable to attend - unavoidable full closure
Y5	Unable to attend - criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend - public health guidance/law
Y7	Unable to attend - unavoidable (other than Y1-Y6)