

Mytham Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Dates Formally Approved by Governors	8 th December 2025
Policy reviewed following new DFE Guidance Aug 24	Autumn 2024 October 2026
Next Review Due	Autumn 2027
Person(s) Responsible for Implementation & Monitoring	Stacey Burke Head Teacher)
Other Relevant Policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Mytham Primary

Policy on Punctuality and Attendance

1 Introduction

This policy has been updated following the publication of '*working together to improve school attendance*' DfE 2024

Children legally have to be in school for 190 days per year. It is, in fact, against the law to keep children off school, unless they are ill. If a parent fails to ensure their child attends school regularly and the absence is not approved by the Head teacher, parents may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Ensuring their child attends school every day is therefore every parents' responsibility once they reach legal school age. Every day counts in their child's education.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a legal duty on parents to ensure their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The opportunity for your child to have access to a good education in a Bolton school is very important to us all. Encouraging good attendance gives each pupil the best chance to learn and achieve to their full potential.

The vast majority of our pupils achieve very good attendance, and the number of unauthorised absences (without permission agreed by the school) is lower in Bolton and Mytham specifically, than compared to the national average. Therefore, good attendance is not a problem in most cases.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained.

The guidance below sets out our procedures for recording attendance and for monitoring attendance.

It also sets out what Mytham school leaders and pastoral team will do, if they are concerned about the attendance of a pupil.

Taking a register

Under the School Attendance Regulations 2024, the Governor Board are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2. Safeguarding and attendance.

Attending school every day reduces the chances of children and young people becoming vulnerable to harm. School has a responsibility to ensure a pupil is attending school. If they are not, school staff have a duty to find out why a child is not in school and where the child is. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility.

As a school we safeguard children and promote the welfare and future life opportunities for them by:

* expecting regular attendance to school and finding out what the barriers to attendance are.

*Offering support where required.

- * having a clear behaviour for learning policy
- * ensuring health and safety within the school
- * allowing them access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- * having a clear anti – bullying policy
- * having a robust safeguarding policy

3. Punctuality

Start of the School Day Expectations

- School Start Time: 8:40 AM for all year groups (Reception – Year 6).
- Gate Opening: Gates open at 8:30 AM and close at 8:50 AM.
- Late Arrivals:
 - Children arriving after 8:50 AM are considered late and must enter through the main reception. They will receive an authorised late mark (L) in the register.
 - Children arriving after 9:00 AM will receive an unclassified mark ('U') in the register. In other words – arrived late without permission.

3.1 Lateness can cause children to miss key learning that happens immediately as they enter school. This is during the registration period 8.40-8.50am. It is vital that each child is at school, on time, every day so they do not fall behind their peers.

3.2 If your child is going to be late, for any reason, please contact the school office before 8.40am to explain the reason. This will then be recorded on the register.

3.3 All lateness, before and after the close of registers, will be logged and- should this become a regular occurrence-you will be asked to meet with the Pastoral staff or Head Teacher to discuss steps to address attendance or punctuality issues.

3.4 Persistent Lateness and Penalty Notices

Parents should be aware that they will be issued with a fine by the local authority, if their child is **persistently** late after **9.00am**. This mark is a 'U' and means unauthorised. In other words – arrived late without permission.

If a child accumulates **10 'U' marks within two consecutive half terms**, the local authority will consider issuing a **Penalty Notice**. This fine is the same as for unauthorised holidays.

- **Current fine:** £160 per parent, per child.
- **Reduced fine:** £80 if paid within **21 days** of receiving the Penalty Notice.

Please note: The fine applies **per parent and per child**.

3.5 It is important to note that any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days, with no option for a discounted rate.

3.6 A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the third (or subsequent) offence(s), another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

4. Attendance and absence

4.1 Definitions for absence

School is legally required to record each student's attendance twice daily during term time.

Any absence from school will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Once a parent or carer has informed school of the reason for absence, it is the schools decision how they to classify the absence on the register- not the parents.

The school term dates each year are posted on the website.

We ask that parents only look at the calendar on the website -not from any other sources- as they may have incorrect information.

4.2 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason **and** the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child is unwell, the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.

Consequently, not all absences reported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Reasons for authorised absence include:

1. Illness of the child
2. Family bereavement
3. Medical appointments, as long as the adult has tried to make the appointment out of school time
4. Receiving education off site
5. Religious observance

Authorisation is dependent upon the applicable regulations and circumstances.

4.3 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as **unauthorised** when a child is away from school without permission.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without one of the authorised reasons above, even when a parent has given permission or when a parent has told us about it.

An unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied that the reason for the absence is permitted, such as:

- * Holiday in term time
- * Truancy
- * Looking after family members
- * Accompanying family members to a medical appointment
- * Illness that should not stop them attending school
- * Taking a full day for a brief medical appointment which can take place in half a day
- * attending a wedding
- * Having a day out
- * No contact from an adult explaining the reason for absence within 24 hours

4.4 If a child is absent, the following is expected

- 4.4.1 It is the responsibility of the parent, carer or guardian to contact the school at the start of each day of absence. They should provide a reason for the absence.
- 4.4.2 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The school office will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian, so they can supply a reason, if they have not contacted the school before the end of registration.
- 4.4.3 If the child returns to school and school has not yet had an explanation for the absence, their parent/guardian will be required to explain the child's absence. If no explanation is given this could result in it being recorded as unauthorised.
- 4.4.4 Where ever possible, a telephone call should be made to the school prior to the day of a planned absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment, so that this can be logged correctly in the electronic register.
- 4.4.5 Should you wish to request a leave of absence from school for a holiday, examination, competition or funeral etc. then please complete a leave of absence request form. Paper copies can be found in the foyer or a digital copy is on the school website.

- 4.4.6 School are willing to support parents in helping children return to school if they are well but need to continue with medication or if they have had an injury /operation e.g. a broken leg but are otherwise well. In certain circumstances, we can make reasonable adaptations so that their needs can be catered for. Parents should contact school to discuss how we can best support their child and a risk assessment would be completed to support your child. This will ensure that the impact on the child's learning is minimal.
- 4.4.7 The same applies for a family bereavement or trauma. Sometimes, children find the routine of school brings them reassurance and helps them. We urge parents to talk to our pastoral staff or senior leadership team so that we can sensitively support and care for children in this situation.
- 4.4.8 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. If we have any concerns about the whereabouts of a child after speaking to parents or we cannot contact parents/ guardians/wider family, we may need to conduct a welfare visit to the home address or we may need to contact Children's Services or the police.

5 Requests for leave of absence

- 5.1 In August 2024 the Government made amendments to the school attendance regulations by removing reference to family holidays and extended leave during term time. **The amendments made clear that the Head teacher should not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**
- 5.2 The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. **Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.**
- 5.3 Mytham follows Bolton Local Authorities criteria when making the decision to issue penalty notices as a result of holidays being taken which are unauthorised.

6 Long-term absence

- 6.1 When children have an illness or an operation that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will consider sending work home. This is very much dependent upon how well the child is. For longer term absence, due to illness, school will work with parents and families to find a balance of school work and rest so that the child continues to make progress.
- 6.2 If the absence is a planned one e.g. following an operation, Mytham senior leaders and class teachers are happy to work with parents to ensure that their child is supported upon their return to school. In certain circumstances we can make reasonable adaptations so that their needs can be catered for. This may include a phased return.
- 6.3 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact and work with support services such as the Early Intervention Team (previously known as 'Educational Welfare Officer') and/ or Hospital Teaching for advice regarding how to support a child.
- 6.4 Occasionally school may be able to offer a part time timetable in order to ease a child back into school particularly after an extended absence for ill health.
- 6.5 It is important that parents and school work together in these cases so that the child does not develop anxiety around returning to school. If necessary we have the support of a team of mental health specialists to assist. (MHST) and our own pastoral team.
- 6.6 If the absence is due to a child going on holiday, the school will **not** provide work for the child to complete during their holiday. Please do not ask for work if you are taking your child out of school to go on holiday. Parents should not make the decision to remove a child from school lightly. The impact on their child's educational progress can be detrimental and significant. The class teacher will not always be able to revisit the missed work on a 1-1 basis. Often the work is linked to a whole class project and cannot be completed at another time.

In addition, children who miss assessments due to a holiday, may not be able to take the assessment upon their return. Statutory assessments in Y1, Y4 and Y6 are only able to be taken during weeks designated by the Department for Education.

Other non-statutory assessment weeks are planned carefully into the term and are positioned to give the pupil the best chance of being able to apply their learning from that term. Often revision takes place around these assessments and this level of intervention and support is not possible on a 1-1 basis upon the child's return. Missing planned assessments can cause a student to underperform upon their return, if they have to sit them without necessary preparation and under different circumstances than their peers.

7 Repeated unauthorised absences and Persistent Absenteeism

- 7.1 In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent attendance from worsening. It is essential that parents keep school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance. They are reminded of this duty in the home school agreement and other school communications.
- 7.2 In the first instance, please discuss with your child's class teacher if you are having difficulties getting your child to school. Class teachers have a wealth of experience and have a tool kit of suggestions in our **'Preventative Offer for attendance and punctuality'**, which they could discuss with you. Class teachers can also link up with the Pastoral team, if necessary, to secure support for both parent and child.
- 7.3 Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.
- 7.4 **Should attendance /punctuality continue to be a problem then we have three stages to follow ranging from Informal support to Formal Support to Statutory intervention**

IMPROVING ATTENDANCE PATHWAY

The school regularly monitors attendance of students who are of school age. The school target for attendance is 97%. If attendance starts to drop below 90% parents will be contacted more formally because this is a concern and is called 'persistent absence'. It could lead to a fine unless it is addressed.

Stage 1

Parents /carers will receive our 'Attendance /punctuality: Stage 1' letter. This will invite parents/carers into school to a meeting with the pastoral team and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to discuss any barriers for school attendance. We will try to understand what the barriers are to being on time / school attendance. We will also look at a range of solutions and strategies that you can try. This could include looking at strategies you might find useful to try and/or signposting you to services who could offer advice and support in the home. We will then monitor punctuality /attendance for a period of time. We hope that the situation will improve.

Stage 2

If- after a monitoring period, a child continues to have a repeated number of unexplained or unauthorised absences and attendance remains below 90% this will be formally classed as persistent absence. Parents will receive a 'follow up attendance meeting' Stage 2 letter. This letter will invite parents to a formal meeting with the pastoral team and a member of Senior Leadership Team. They will again explain the concern and the measures that could be taken should an improvement not be seen. This will also be an opportunity to discuss what the continued barriers are for your family. We will also discuss the following if applicable:

- If you child has a medical need; we could support a referral to the Public Health Nursing Service (0-19). They could help to explore your child's health needs further and offer advice around how school attendance could improve.
- If your child's behaviour or their emotional health, is becoming a barrier to getting them into school; our Pastoral Team can support you.
- If the situation is more complex and this is affecting your ability to bring your child to school, we can offer Early Help support. There are a range of services we could involve. We are happy to discuss these in the meeting

At this formal stage, a parent contract between school and parent/ guardian will be written. This will contain specific, achievable, realistic, timely targets for improvement so everyone is clear on what is expected. A further meeting to review the plan will be made at this meeting.

It is important to note that when you are working with the school at Stage 2 of the 'Improving attendance pathway' no illness will be recorded on the register unless evidence of a GP appointment or other suitable evidence can be provided to support further absence.

Stage 3

If the situation does not improve, the next stage- Stage 3- will be triggered. School will contact the Early Intervention Team (Educational Welfare Officer), who will contact parents and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The Education Welfare Officer, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. If there is no improvement, parents may be issued with an Education Penalty Notice (fine)

School will send a letter to parents explaining that we are moving to Stage 3 of the 'Improving Attendance Pathway' and external services will be invited to get involved.

However, even at this stage, school will continue to work with parents to support good attendance.

8 Rewards for excellent attendance/punctuality

8.1 The school target for attendance is 97%.

8.2 School celebrates good attendance by awarding certificates at the end of autumn, spring and summer term. The names of all children who have 97% and above attendance in any term will be in the school newsletter's 'Attendance Roll of Honour'. At the end of the academic year (summer term) we award pupils who have had 97% attendance all year. This is because they have contributed towards achieving the schools 97% target.

8.3 Each fortnight we publish our overall school attendance figure for that week and also attendance data for each class.

8.4 Once a year we publish the schools overall attendance for the previous year and remind parents of our attendance expectations.

9 Attendance targets; the current target for whole school attendance is 97%

9.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

10 Illness and attendance

Unfortunately, sometimes a pupil has to stay off school, even if their parent feels that are well enough to attend. We appreciate that this conflicts with our advice above, however if a child – or member of staff- is suffering from an illness which could lead to wider infection, then we need to limit contact. We have a number of vulnerable children/ staff in school and we seek to minimise impact on their health. We follow the NHS guidance for illness in particular around how to infection control. Please consult the NHS poster below - in particular their guidance regarding vomiting and diarrhoea. We follow the same guidance of **48 hours absence following the last episode**. Please see poster, 'Should I keep my child off school?' in the appendices

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance, and they receive an annual report from the Head teacher. The Governor Board also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 11.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records electronically on file in line with retention schedules.
- 11.3 The rates of attendance will be reported through relevant Governor's sub-committees (Pupil Wellbeing) and at the full Governor Board meeting each term.
- 11.4 The Head teacher will be responsible for monitoring attendance and attendance patterns. He/she reports attendance / punctuality data to Governors termly.
- 11.5 The pastoral team monitor attendance of pupils causing a concern with attendance / punctuality, on a daily basis. They will seek to offer parents /carers support if a pupil is at risk of absence becoming persistent .Pastoral staff may, in certain circumstances, work directly with older Y5/6 pupils', if they are able to take some responsibility for getting to school on time.
- 11.6 This policy will be reviewed by the Governor Board every year, or earlier if considered necessary.

EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

MINUTES LATE PER DAY	EQUIVALENT OF MISSING	HOW MANY LESSONS THIS IS MISSED
5 MINUTES	3.4 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	17 LESSONS
10 MINUTES	6.9 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	35 LESSONS
15 MINUTES	10.3 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	51 LESSONS
20 MINUTES	13.8 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	69 LESSONS
30 MINUTES	20.7 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	104 LESSONS

Attendance Ladder

Equates to:





UK Health
Security
Agency



Should I keep my child off school?

Yes

Until...

Chickenpox	at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours after their last episode
Cold and Flu-like illness (including COVID-19)	they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19.
Impetigo	their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics
Measles	4 days after the rash first appeared
Mumps	5 days after the swelling started
Scabies	they've had their first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after they started taking antibiotics
Whooping Cough	48 hours after they started taking antibiotics

No

but make sure you let their school or nursery know about...

Hand, foot and mouth	Glandular fever
Head lice	Tonsillitis
Threadworms	Slapped cheek



SCAN ME

Advice and guidance

To find out more, search for health protection in schools or scan the QR code or visit <https://qrco.de/minfec>.



School Attendance and Penalty Notices

Information for parents and carers

Your child's education is really important. Regular attendance at school increases your child's chance of getting good qualifications and a good job.

Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in primary and secondary school.

The Law

You are responsible for:

- Ensuring your children receive full time education
- Their regular and punctual attendance at school

As the parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly and the absence is unauthorised by the Headteacher, even if they are missing school without your knowledge.

If you fail to ensure your child's regular attendance at school the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice or instigate legal proceedings for an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

What is regular attendance?

In April 2017, the Supreme Court held that attending school "*regularly*" means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and not "*sufficiently frequent attendance*". This means that a child must attend school on every day that the school requires him or her to do so and failure to do this may lead to the commission of an offence.

What counts as unauthorised absence?

- Any absence from school that the school has not given permission for
- Truancy from school, with or without parent's knowledge
- Parentally condoned absence (i.e. you know your child is absent from school and you do nothing about it)
- Delayed return from a period of leave of absence
- Arriving late at school after the register has closed

Can I take my child out of school for a holiday during term time?

You should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time.

The regulations make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.



The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances why your child needs to be absent from school, you should apply in advance, by writing to the Headteacher explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting leave of absence.

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher whether to authorise the absence. If the school refuses a request for leave of absence and the child is still taken out of school this will be recorded as unauthorised absence

Changes to the issuing of a Penalty Notice effective from 19th August 2024.

Following extensive development with schools and local authorities, a new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence is being introduced from 19th August 2024.

This will ensure that penalty notices are issued consistently across England, ensure a support first approach is adapted (except for a term time holiday).

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and can be issued when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent of 5 days consecutive or otherwise) over a 10-week rolling school week. A separate Penalty Notice can be issued for each parent per child.

You have to pay a fine, but you do not have to appear in Court. You also have to make sure that your child's attendance at school improves.

Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

Is a notice to improve given?

The school may send you a notice to improve telling you that a Penalty Notice may be issued once the threshold of 10 sessions has been met. This notice to improve will also include details of your child's absences and the support that school has put in place to address the irregular attendance. If you receive a notice to improve this is a further opportunity for you to work with the school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice.

Your child must have no further unauthorised absences from school from the date of the letter. If your child's unauthorised absence continues then school may request that a Penalty Notice be issued by the Local Authority.

The school is not required to send a notice to improve where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.

What are the costs?

£160 if you pay within 28 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice reducing to £80 if you pay within 21 days. (Per parent, per child).

With any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the amount will be charged at £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

There is a national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool will be considered (such as prosecution)

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay in full within 28 days, Bolton Council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

If proven this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on individual circumstances.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice, but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. A prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending on your circumstances.

The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice

If the poor school attendance persists the Local Authority may also consider prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

What can I do?

Ensure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and for your child.

Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school. If you suspect your child is not happy in school, you should contact the school as soon as possible.

Take an interest in your child's education, ask about their day, praise and encourage achievements at school.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

If you are experiencing problems with your child's attendance at school, it is really important that you work closely with school to resolve the matter. Alternatively, for further guidance and support you can contact:

Child Employment and Enforcement Officer Early Intervention Service
1st Floor, BASE Marsden Road Bolton
BL1 2PF
Tel: 01204 338173

Moments matter, attendance counts. Every lesson counts. Improving attendance, raising attainment

The legal definitions of 'parent' are:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children's Act (1989)
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Appendix 4 School Attendance and Penalty Notices.

What can I do?

- Ensure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and for your child
- If your child is ill contact the school on the first day of absence and explain the circumstances
- If your child is away for other reasons let the school know, especially if you know in advance
- Do not take holidays or leave in term time
- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school.
- If you suspect your child is not happy in school you should contact the school as soon as possible
- Take an interest in your child's education, ask about their day, praise and encourage achievements at school

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

If you are experiencing problems with your child's attendance at school, it is really important that you work closely with school to resolve the matter.

Alternatively, for further guidance and support you can contact:

**Child Employment and Enforcement Officer
Early Intervention Service
1st Floor, BASE
Marsden Road
Bolton BL1 2PF Tel:
01204 338173**

Why is attendance so important?

Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in primary and secondary school.

Missing school has a huge impact on how well a pupil gets on at school. The more school a child misses, the harder it is for them to get into a routine of attending regularly and catch up on the work they have missed. Missing school can also leave a child more open to becoming involved in crime, either as an offender or as a victim.

Research shows that a year 11 pupil who has missed 17 days during the school year may get one grade less than they would have achieved had they attended regularly. A few days of absence could have a huge impact on a child's future opportunities.

**Every lesson counts
Improving attendance,
raising attainment
Moments matter
Attendance counts**

The legal definitions of 'parent' are:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
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School attendance and Penalty Notices

Information for parents and carers



Appendix 5 Improving Attendance Pathway

Stage 1 of 'Improving Attendance Pathway' Attendance (Punctuality) Overview

Bolton Council is committed to providing all children with the best start in life and works hard to ensure that all children in Bolton attend school regularly.

The majority of parents in Bolton ensure that their children attend school regularly.

What does the law say about school attendance?

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents or carers may be prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly and their absence is unauthorised (or in other words, the school cannot or has not given permission for them to be off school).

Bolton Council has the power to issue Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution. Penalty notices are issued to parents or carers who are considered capable of but are unwilling to work towards improving their child's attendance.

When will a penalty notice be issued?

Bolton Council will always work with schools, parents/carers and pupils to improve their attendance but will issue Penalty Notices where a pupil has missed at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to unauthorised absence over a period of 10 rolling school weeks.

What is a notice to improve?

School may send you a notice to improve telling you that a Penalty Notice may be issued if the threshold of 10 sessions has been met.

It will include details of your child's absence, and the support school has already put in place. If you receive a notice to improve this is a further opportunity for you to work with school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice. During this period, your child must not have any further unauthorised absences from school. School is not required to send a notice to improve where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday taken during term time.

What is the cost of a Penalty Notice?

£160 if you pay within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, reducing to £80 if you pay within 21 days (Per parent per child). You must pay the whole of the amount owing in one payment – you cannot pay in instalments or just pay part.

With any second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the amount will be charged at £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

There is a national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) this will be considered for progression to prosecution.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay in full within 28 days, Bolton Council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

If proven this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on individual circumstances.

If poor school attendance persists the Local Authority may also consider prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the penalty notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. A prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending on your circumstances.

The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty.

Improving attendance = Improving outcomes

Everyday counts, every day in school makes a difference to your child's future.

Letter

Date

Dear Parents of,

I am writing to inform you about your child's attendance and /or punctuality.

Attendance is currently XX and there have been XX late marks. This is now classed as **persistent absence**.

Bolton guidelines are very clear about why 100% attendance is important (please see enclosed leaflet). Our school attendance policy sets out the processes that we adhere to when attendance and punctuality fall below acceptable levels.

We would like to invite you to a meeting to see how we can support you moving forward with the issues outlined above. The meeting will be with our Attendance team.

The meeting is scheduled for xxxxxxxxx

We would like this meeting to be a supportive meeting. We will be able to look at your child's attendance pattern with you and discuss any reasons for the decline and ways in which the situation can improve. This is Stage 1 of our 'Improving Attendance Pathway'

If you are unable to attend the meeting stated above please contact the office to arrange a more suitable date and time. We are happy to accommodate work commitments and can meet outside of the school day, if required.

We look forward to working with you,

Stacey Burke

Louise Taggart

Zoe Harrison

Head teacher

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator

Attendance Officer

Stage 2 of Improving Attendance Pathway

Follow up Attendance/Punctuality meeting

Date

Dear Parents of,

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance and /or punctuality has not improved since we met on XXXXXXXX.

Add current STATS

Attendance is currently XX add narrative .and there have been XX late marks.

We would like to invite you to a further meeting to explain our concerns and the measures that **could** be taken should we not see improvement. This is Stage 2 of our 'Improving Attendance Pathway'. The meeting will be with our Attendance team.

The meeting is scheduled for xxxxxxxxx

We will work together to find solutions which may include:

- If you child has a medical need; we could support a referral to the Public Health Nursing Service (0-19).They could help to explore your child's health needs further and offer advice around how school attendance could improve.
- If your child's behaviour or their emotional health is becoming a barrier to getting them into school; our Pastoral Team can support you. This could include looking at strategies you might find useful to try and/or signposting you to services who could offer advice and support in the home.
- If the situation is more complex and this is affecting your ability to bring your child to school, we can offer Early Help support. There are a range of services we could involve. We are happy to discuss these in the meeting

If you are unable to attend the meeting stated above please contact the office to arrange a more suitable date and time. We are happy to accommodate work commitments and can meet outside of the school day, if required.

Yours sincerely

Stacey Burke

Louise Taggart

Zoe Harrison

Head teacher

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator

Attendance Officer

Stage 3 of Improving Attendance Pathway

Referral to local authority Early Intervention Team

Date

Dear Parents of,

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance and /or punctuality has not improved since we met on XXXXXXXX.

Add current STATS

Attendance is currently XX add narrative .and there have been XX late marks.

We are now referring the case to the Early Intervention Team, in line with Stage 3 of our 'Improving attendance pathway'.

Bolton guidelines are very clear about why 100% attendance is important (please see enclosed leaflet). Our school attendance policy sets out the processes that we adhere to when attendance and punctuality fall below acceptable levels.

The Mytham team are committed to continuing to support you and your family

Yours sincerely

Stacey Burke

Louise Taggart

Zoe Harrison

Headteacher

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator

Attendance Officer