

# **Bledlow Ridge School**



## **Attendance and Absence Policy**

**Date agreed: June 2025**

**Review date: June 2026**

## Attendance / Holiday in Term Time Policy

This outline policy should be read alongside the statutory guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

### Aims and objectives

At Bledlow Ridge School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Buckinghamshire Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

0 Days missed – 100% attendance  
10 Days missed – 95% attendance  
20 Days missed – 90% attendance  
30 Days missed – 85% attendance

### Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- School Attendance (Pupil [Registration](#)) (England) Regulations 2024
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### Roles and responsibilities

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before *8.40am* on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

**The governing body** are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

**The headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

**The Senior Attendance Champion (senior leader)** *Natasha Harrison* is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

**The school attendance officer** *Rebecca Robinson (office staff)* is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (*or other member of staff authorised by the headteacher*) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**The class teacher/form tutor** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office

**School administration/office staff** are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

## **School processes for recording attendance and absence**

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
  - The original entry
  - The amended entry
  - The reason for the amendment
  - The date on which the amendment was made
  - The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

## **Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

### **Persistent absence (PA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

## **Missing education**

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

## **Attendance expectations**

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.40am** on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.40am and the register will be kept open until 8.50am but no longer than 30 minutes. If a child arrives at school after the start of the school day but within 30 minutes, they will be registered as 'late'; this is not an unauthorised absence and the child is counted as present for the morning session.

Lateness beyond 30 minutes will be counted as an absence. This will be an unauthorised absence unless parents/carers provide the school with an acceptable reason.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8.40am and will close at 8.50am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The afternoon register will be marked by 12.50pm for EYFS and Year 1 (closed at 1.00pm) and 1.05pm for Year 2 and 3 (closed at 1.15pm) and 1.20pm for Year 5 and 6 (closed at 1.30pm).

## **Absence Procedures**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by **9.30am** or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school. Parents should inform the school by email or calling.

If a child is absent with no explanation, school office staff will telephone or e-mail the parents to ascertain the reason. Please make sure that we have up-to-date contact details.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the headteacher. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, the headteacher will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

## **Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance via calling, emailing or speaking to a member of the office team of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.
- Return of parent from active service (Forces)

In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (*see definition above*) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

### **Procedures following unexplained absence**

- The school will call the pupil's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the family home. If there is still no response the school may call the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carers on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will work with the

parents/carers to support as required. External agencies may be contacted to provide support for the family and school.

### **How the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance and the school's strategy for using data to target attendance**

1. The office ensures that all class teachers have a copy of their pupil's attendance record for parents evening. The office team must highlight any concerns (e.g. less than 95% attendance) as well as successes (e.g. 100% attendance). The class teacher must use these comments and any additional information during their discussion about attendance with the parents.
2. The office must ensure that a copy of pupils' attendance records and data is given to parents alongside the pupils' annual school report. The office team must highlight concerns and successes to the Headteacher who will comment on these on the school report.
3. Wrap around care is also offered by the school as another opportunity to encourage pupils not to be late to school. This service is run by an outside provider and is available to all pupils.
4. Certificates will be awarded to classes with the highest attendance at the end of each term.

### **Removal from Roll**

In line with Buckinghamshire Council requirements, the school will inform the Local Authority whenever a pupil is removed from roll. This ensures statutory compliance, safeguards pupils, and supports accurate monitoring of attendance across the county.

The school will notify the Local Authority in the following circumstances:

- School Attendance Order has changed
- Pupil registered at another school
- Dual registration has ended (informed by the main school)
- Receiving education otherwise than at school (e.g., Elective Home Education)
- No longer ordinarily resident at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school
- Children Missing in Education (CME) Officer instructed school to remove a pupil
- Pupil certified as not medically fit for school
- Pupil is no longer compulsory school age
- Pupil has ceased to attend an independent school
- Pupil has been permanently excluded
- Pupil has not moved up from nursery

### **Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing**

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels in how i.e., through letters, reports etc.
- Monitor attendance and absence data (fortnightly meetings with Office team and headteacher)
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern - office team to complete excel spreadsheet outlining groups and patterns.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

- Provide regular attendance reports to SENDCo and class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and persistence absence, such as:

- Children in need LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of persistence absence to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50%, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of persistence absence is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe persistence absence following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

### **Legal sanctions**

As a Buckinghamshire Local Authority maintained school, we take a 'support first' approach to securing a pupil's regular attendance at school. Therefore, the school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

The Notice to Improve should be issued with an identified improvement period of 6 weeks (60 sessions) in order to achieve sustained change. However, if unauthorised absence continues, the Local Authority will consider issuing a penalty notice after 3 weeks (30 sessions).

Bledlow Ridge School does not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and will make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency.



To ensure consistent delivery of penalty notices the following criteria will apply:

- there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks).
- if a headteacher does not authorise a request from a parent/carer for term time leave and the parent takes the leave. (School must advise parents of this and how the action conforms to the school's attendance policy).
- persistently late after the close of the register (coded U).
- in certain circumstances, including where ten sessions of absence comprise of unauthorised leave of absence in term time, a penalty notice can be issued without a formal warning having been issued previously.
- where a child who has been excluded is present in a public place during the first five days a penalty notice will be issued on the first occasion if appropriate.
- a penalty notice may also be issued without a formal warning if a formal warning has already been issued to the parent/carer previously.

#### Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn. In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years an additional check will be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil.

The school must consider requesting Buckinghamshire Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

#### Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.

The school's attendance target is 96% – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school newsletter.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders

### **Links to other policies**

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

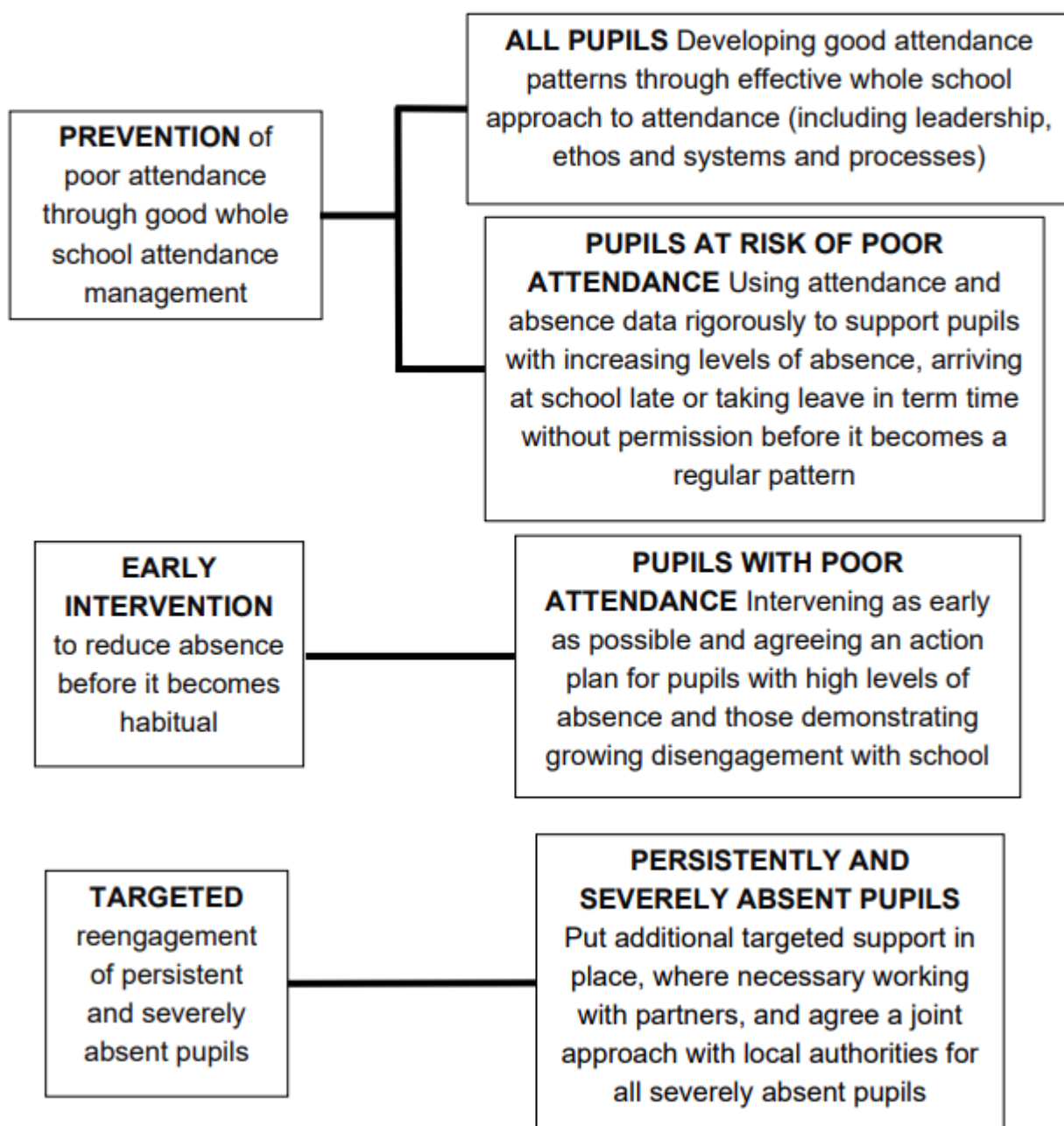
### **Responsibilities:**

The Education Act 2004 states that all children of compulsory school age (five to sixteen) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/Carers are legally responsible for making sure their child attends regularly.

Bledlow Ridge School welcomes the active support of parents/carers. The school seeks to develop an effective partnership between home and the school based on mutual understanding and trust.

The name and contact details of the school's Senior Attendance Champion is Natasha Harrison, Headteacher, [office@bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:office@bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk)

## Effective school attendance improvement and management



## Appendix 1 - Letter 1A

<address block>

<Todays Date>

Dear <salutation>

Re: <full name> DoB: <dob>

By law parents are responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. I am writing to you as your <son's, daughter's> attendance at school is currently irregular and therefore a cause for concern.

<His, Her> attendance has been monitored over the last five weeks and is currently only <%attendance>%.

Every effort will be made to support <forename> if you feel <he, she> is experiencing significant difficulties that may impact upon <his, her> attendance. If you believe this to be the case, please contact me to discuss the matter further. In the meantime, I will continue to monitor <forename>'s attendance for a further three weeks, during which time I expect to see a significant improvement. Should your child's attendance remain irregular during this time it is likely you will be invited to an Attendance Contract Meeting.

A pupil's attendance forms part of their official school record and only the headteacher has the authority to authorise absences.

Under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. Under section 444(1A) EA 1996, a parent commits a further offence where the circumstances in section 444(1) apply and the parent knows that the child fails to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause the child to attend. The penalty for failing to ensure attendance is a fine of up to £2,500.

If you knowingly fail to send your child to school, you may be prosecuted for the more serious offence under Section 444(1A) the penalty for this offence is a fine up to level 4 on the standard scale and or imprisonment of up to three months.

This means that parents/carers may be subject to a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued **as a means of avoiding prosecution** and there is no automatic right to appeal for a Penalty Notice.

Yours sincerely

<Name>

**Headteacher**

**Name of School**

**Appendix 2 - Letter 1B**

<address block>

<today's date>

Dear <salutation>

**Re.: <full name>**

**DoB: <dob>**

Further to my letter dated <date of 1a>, I am pleased to inform you that following the **three**-week monitoring period, <forename's> attendance has improved significantly.

Given that <forename's> attendance is no longer irregular, I will not be taking any further action at this time.

However, should <forename's> attendance become irregular again during this academic year, I will (school to enter actions that will be taken)

Yours sincerely

<name>

Headteacher

Name of school

**Appendix 3 - County Attendance Team Referral form (Term time)**

**COUNTY ATTENDANCE TEAM REFERRAL FORM**

**TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE PENALTY NOTICE**

Please complete this form for any requests to the County Attendance Team for the issuing of penalty notices for term time leave of absences only. Please complete a separate form for **each child**.

Referral for			
Full legal name of Child:	Name of School:		Date of Referral:
Permanent/ Temporary address:	Date of Birth:		School Year:
	Gender:		Ethnicity:
	UPN:		
	First Language:  Is an interpreter required (please highlight): Yes / No		
Postcode:	If yes, please ensure all school correspondence have been translated. We will <b>not</b> be able to proceed if letters have not met this requirement.		
<b>Please explain below the reason/s why a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this family.</b> (Please also consider any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability and/or where further support may be more appropriate)			

## Penalty Notice Details

Date leave of absence request received from parent (please enclose a copy):

Date school issued request refusal (please enclose a copy):

Dates of unauthorised absence for term time leave of absence:

Dates of previous penalty notices issued in the last three years (from September 2024):

Please enclose a copy of attendance register which must show when the child returned to school.

Please ensure any unauthorised leave of absences are marked with a G or O code (there must 10 sessions or more)

## Parent/Carer details – Please provide details of those to be issued with penalty notices

(Please note if they do not reside with the child a penalty notice might not be issued)

### Full Name of Parent/Carer 1:

Address:

Contact number:

Email address:

Date of birth:

Relationship to child:

Responsibility? Yes / No

Does this person have Parental

### Full Name of Parent/Carer 2:

Address:

Contact number:

Email address:

Date of birth:

Relationship to child:

Responsibility? Yes / No

Does this person have Parental

If there are siblings in another school, you **must** check whether their leave of absence request has been approved. **We may not be able to proceed with a referral if a sibling has had a leave of absence authorised by another school.**

Siblings at another school? **Yes / No**

Has school been contacted to ensure a consistent approach to the absence? **Yes / No**

Siblings aged 5 to 16 years old

D.O.B.

School

<b>Approval by Senior Manager:</b> In order to agree a referral from a School or Academy this form must be signed by a named Senior Manager. This will act as an agreement for the Penalty Notice to be issued		
Name:	Position:	
Email Address:	Telephone No.:	
Signed:	Date:	

**Appendix 4 - PENALTY NOTICE REFERRAL FORM – Irregular School attendance**

**COUNTY ATTENDANCE TEAM**

**PENALTY NOTICE REFERRAL FORM – Irregular School attendance**

Please complete this form for any requests to the County Attendance Team for the issuing of Penalty Notices when schools have completed their own Attendance Contract Meetings. Please complete a separate form for **each child**.

Referral for		
Full Legal name of Child:	Name of School:	Date of Referral:
Permanent/ Temporary address:	Date of Birth:	School Year:
	Gender:	Ethnicity:
	UPN:	



Postcode:	First Language:  Is an interpreter required (please highlight): Yes / No   If yes, please ensure all school correspondence have been translated. We will <b>not</b> be able to proceed if letters have not met this requirement.
<p><b>Please explain below the reason/s why a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this family.</b> (Please also consider any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability and/or where further support may be more appropriate)</p>	
<b>Penalty Notice Details</b>	
<p>Date of ACM invite letter sent to parent/carer:</p> <p>Reason for the penalty notice from section 4 of code of conduct: (please tick)</p> <p><b>Irregular school attendance;</b></p> <p><b>Being in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion</b></p> <p>Please enclose a copy of attendance register.</p>	
<p><b>Full legal name and title of Parent/Carer details – Please provide details of those to be issued with penalty notices</b> (If child does not reside with a parent a penalty notice might not be issued)</p>	

Full Name of Parent/Carer 1:

Address:

Contact number:

Email address:

Date of birth:

Relationship to child (e.g., Mum, stepdad):  
Yes/No

Does this person have Parental Responsibility?

Full Name of Parent/Carer 2:

Address:

Contact number:

Email address:

Date of birth:

Relationship to child (e.g., Mum, stepdad):  
Yes/No

Does this person have Parental Responsibility?

Siblings  
at  
another  
school?  
**Yes / No**

Has the  
school  
been  
contacted  
to ensure  
a  
consisten  
t  
approach  
to  
irregular  
attendanc  
e? **Yes /  
No**

If no,  
please  
explain  
why.

<b>Siblings aged 5 to 16 years old</b>	<b>D.O.B</b>	<b>School</b>
<p><b>Please enclose copies of the following documents:</b></p> <p>Any informal support offered to family (including referrals to other agencies)</p> <p>1a letter</p> <p>Attendance Contract Meeting request</p> <p>Attendance Contract Meeting forms (including all reviews)</p>		
<p><b>Please provide details of any other relevant information:</b></p>		
<p><b>Approval by Senior Manager:</b> In order to agree a referral from a School or Academy this form must be signed by a named Senior Manager. This will act as an agreement for the Penalty Notice to be issued</p>		
Name:	Position in School:	
Email address:	Telephone no.:	
Signed:	Date:	

## School's responsibility Pre Referral

It **must** be stated in your attendance policy that a penalty notice will be considered for all absences due to unauthorised leave of absences i.e. irregular school attendance. Use of the County Attendance Team's template letters/forms is strongly advocated. (see templates on Schools Web and email us for a copy of the flowchart [countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk))

Penalty Notices may be considered in the following circumstances:

- There are 10 or more sessions of consecutive G codes (excluding weekends and school holidays).
- Penalty Notices will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences within a 10-week period. Schools should make a judgement based on each individual case and not have a blanket rule whether to issue or not. This is not the same as irregular attendance, it is where there is a pattern of behaviour that clearly indicates that the parent is trying to get around the National Framework to avoid the Penalty Notice process. For example, if there are 8 sessions of G codes plus two other unauthorised sessions within the last 10 weeks.
- Students are of compulsory school age when the leave of absence was taken i.e the term after the student turns five and up to the end of June in the year when the student turns 16.
- Referrals are sent in promptly to the County Attendance Team. This should be **within two weeks of the student returning to school**. Referrals outside of this timeline will be considered however we might not be able to proceed with a prosecution if parents do not pay the penalty notice due to the legal timeframes involved. These should be signed off by a senior manager, who will consider a fine to be appropriate.
- Referrals should include the referral form including all information:- Dates match those days actually taken off school coded as G, Parents full names provided, copies of leave of absence request – letter, form, e-mail, phone message (if relevant), refusal letter (either version), copy of Registration Certificate which includes Student's name at top etc.

## County Attendance Team's responsibility Post Referral

County Attendance team consider referral and either

1. Reject because the referral is incomplete; school to reapply with correct documentation
2. Reject because the evidence would not meet the criteria for issue/prosecution
3. Issue Penalty Notice to parent(s), within two weeks of receiving, wherever possible – confirmation sent to school
4. Withdraw fines where they have been incorrectly issued or further evidence has been provided, which deems them to have extenuating circumstances.
5. Inform school if parent(s) fail to pay the Penalty notice and agree if prosecution is appropriate
6. If prosecution is the most appropriate route - County Attendance team proceed with prosecution and inform school of outcome



# Penalty Notices for School Attendance

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following will come into force for absences that start after 19th August 2024. This is nationwide and across borders if you move school or house. **Term Time Leave is only allowed in exceptional circumstances when communicated in advance with evidence provided as soon as possible to the Headteacher.**

## FIRST OFFENCE

The first Penalty Notice issued for Term Time Leave of Absence or Irregular Attendance, the amount of the fine will be  
£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days and reduced to  
£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

## SECOND OFFENCE

For the second Penalty Notice (within three years of the first offence) issued for Term Time Leave of Absence or Irregular Attendance, the amount of the fine will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered

## THIRD OFFENCE AND SUBSEQUENT OFFENCES

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave of Absence or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. If found guilty there could be up to a maximum fine of £2,500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU  
COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR  
CHILD'S SCHOOL**

In law only the headteacher of a school can authorise a child's absence. A pupil's attendance forms part of their official school record.

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a leave of absence and are strongly advised not to do so.

Headteachers are unable to authorise leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

### 10 sessions in 10 weeks

Penalty Notices will be considered for any 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks.

5 consecutive days of term time absence can trigger a Penalty Notice.

Do not forget that Penalty Notices are issued Per Parent. Per Child.  
i.e. Two siblings absent would result in each parent receiving 2 fines. This could amount to £640

