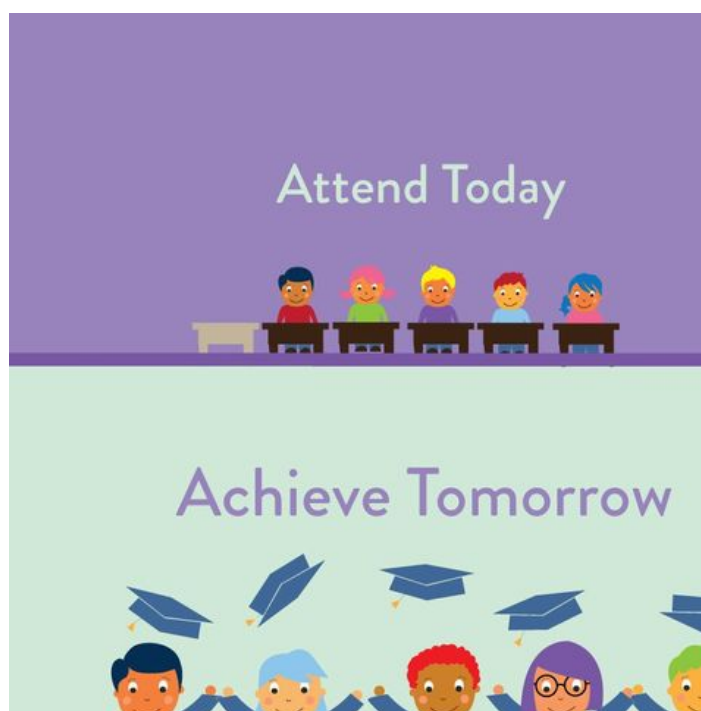




ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY



Headteacher	Ruth Braithwaite
SLT Attendance Lead/Champion	Lucy Gordon, AHT (EYFS/KS1) & DSL
Nominated Attendance Governor	Cherith Hancock
Chair of Governors	Allan Jones
Pastoral Officer	Alex Cowley
Pastoral Administration	Gabrielle Fitzpatrick
Attendance Officer	Jenny Lee
Other key staff: SENDCo Vicki Fallon & Pupil Premium Champion Joanne Boulton	
Approved by governors	November 2025/Updated January 2026
Policy to be reviewed	November 2026 (earlier if LA/Trust updates require this)

This Attendance & Punctuality Policy is part of a broader suite of Safeguarding Policies, including our Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy

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Good attendance is everyone's business



“Wake up, rise and shine,
Bedford starts at quarter to nine!”



‘Ready, Respectful & Safe’ - our school rules

Ready	Respectful	Safe
We are in school every day and on time (Rise & Shine, Bedford starts at quarter to nine) We listen to the person who is talking We have all the equipment we need in school - our reading books, swimming kit, water bottles We wear the correct uniform for school We follow instructions the first time or ask for help if we are unsure We settle quickly to start our work We line up sensibly and quickly; ready to move from lesson to lesson and around school	We use our marvellous manners MR C (saying please, thank you, you are welcome and we hold doors open for each other) We are friendly, kind and caring (both online and offline) We listen to others We include everyone We look after our school building, our property and the environment We speak quietly and calmly We use our words and good listening to solve any problems we encounter We win and lose gracefully We give our best effort to our work	We walk calmly around school We regularly wash our hands We choose games that are fun but safe We use all equipment safely and sensibly We use technology responsibly and keep personal information and passwords safe. We let an adult know immediately if something that is worrying or upsetting happens online . We have kind hands and feet We walk to and from school safely We always talk to someone or use the Bedford worry box on our school website if we have any worries

Improving attendance is everyone's business

Celebrating good attendance and successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school is absolutely vital. Here at Bedford, we work collaboratively and in partnership with parents/carers and all of the key people in their children's lives to follow these steps:

Expect	
• Prioritise attendance improvement across school: • Aspire to high standards of attendance from our pupils and their families. • Build a culture where all children can (and want to be) in school, ready to learn.	
Monitor	
• Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor/declining attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.	
Listen and Understand	
• When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and their family. • Listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all parties can work together to resolve them. This will be in the form of an Attendance Support Plan.	
Facilitate Support	
• Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support that they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include Early Help/Team Around the School or a supportive plan for the whole family if absence is a symptom of wider issues.	
Formalise Support	
• Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, all parties should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support via a Local Authority Attendance Panel/parenting contract for example.	
Enforce	
• Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.	

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Bedford Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.
- 1.2 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education that is 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.
- 1.3 Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- 1.4 The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.
- 1.5 This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:
- **promote children's welfare and safeguarding.**
 - **ensure every pupil in our school has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.**
 - **ensure that pupils succeed whilst at our school.**
 - **ensure that pupils at our school have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.**
- 1.6 Our policy has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, the local authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school, and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.
- 1.7 In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.
[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

1.8 Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- **Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.**
- **Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.**
- **Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.**

1.9 For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and are in school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is only the headteacher, not the parent/carer, who can authorise the absence.

2. Legislation

2.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.

2.2 The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Acts 1996 and 2002.
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013.
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963.
- The Equality Act 2010.

3. Promoting Regular Attendance

3.1 At Bedford Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

3.2 Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

3.3 To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.
- Participate in Trust Attendance Reviews facilitated by School Improvement Liverpool.
- Ensure that attendance is a key focus of all parent consultation events, pupil progress meetings and special educational needs reviews.
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our Bedford Bugle newsletters.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence, as required to do so by law.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements.
- Send home weekly attendance emails for any pupil who has had 100% attendance that week.
- Implement individual support plans and rewards systems as required.
- Reward good or improved school attendance.
- Report to parents/carers regularly with regards to their child's attendance and the impact on their progress.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Allow pupils to wear their own clothes on their birthday.



4. Roles and Responsibilities School Community

4.1 Role of Governors/Trustee Board

- To set high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- To identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the local authority Attendance Team, and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker or youth justice worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.

- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

4.2 Role of Senior Leadership:

- Promote the significance and benefits of regular attendance to both pupils and their parents/carers.
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure a school-wide commitment to promoting good attendance, supported by engaging teaching and learning experiences that motivate all pupils to attend regularly and achieve their full potential.
- Oversee the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure it undergoes an annual review.
- Ensure all staff are informed about the Attendance Policy and receive adequate training to address attendance-related issues.
- Ensure compliance with relevant regulations and legislation.
- Appoint a designated senior attendance leader to champion attendance, allocating sufficient time and resources to the role.
- Submit school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and in a timely manner.
- Regularly report on the school's attendance and related issues to the Governors/Trustees, with termly updates to the governing board and half-termly updates to the nominated governor/trustee responsible for attendance.
- Implement and maintain systems to report, record, and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those educated off-site.
- Regularly collect and analyse attendance data to identify patterns and causes of absenteeism.
- Use the analysed data to develop solutions and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to enhance attendance and provide support to pupils and their families.
- Record all interventions, conversations precisely using factual evidence-based information that may be required should legal proceedings be initiated.

4.3 Role of All Staff - Attendance is everyone's responsibility

- Promote the importance and value of regular attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Contribute to a whole school approach that supports good attendance, reinforced by quality teaching and learning that encourages pupils to attend and succeed.
- Adhere to relevant regulations and legislation.
- Implement and uphold systems for reporting, recording, and monitoring the attendance of all pupils, including those educated off-site.
- Ensure accurate and timely recording of attendance registers.
- Participate in the evaluation of school strategies and interventions related to attendance.
- Work with external agencies to improve attendance and provide support to pupils and their families.

4.4 Role of our school Attendance Team

Current priorities:

- Act at the very earliest point to identify any barriers and prevent any further absence - in doing so, ensure absolute fidelity to our daily absence/Attendance Support Plan review and support templates.
- Consider a preventative support/action (PFA) for every absence and every late code (as part of completing full registration certificate reviews).
- Complete an impact review for every subsequent absence and escalate concern/need for further supportive measures as needed.
- Reduce Persistent Absence by ensuring that the needs of all pupils/their families are met.

Additional aspects to the role:

- Monitor and analyse pupil attendance data.
- Conduct weekly attendance meetings with the Senior Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead and involve the SENCO/Pupil Premium lead, and other relevant staff members as required to maximise impact/outcomes for pupils (particularly those who are under-resourced or vulnerable).
- Implement strategies to promote excellent whole-school attendance.
- Address unsatisfactory attendance by applying strategies agreed in partnership with parents.
- Keep accurate and factual information (on CPOMS) in relation to pupils and their families.
- Coordinate action plans for pupils of concern, including the initiation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan or the implementation of an attendance contract.
- Ensure adherence to first day response procedures when a child is absent without parental contact.
- Lead school-wide initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Refer cases to appropriate external agencies as needed.
- Refer severely absent pupils (attendance is below 50%) for support through the 'Team around the School' initiative.

4.5 Role of Parents/Carers

- Ensure that your child attends every day.
- Provide at least **two** emergency contact numbers to the school.
- Notify the school on the **first day (and each subsequent day)** of absence.
- Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously, this is not always possible but, in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that they can complete most of their timetable before leaving.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school by ensuring that they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for

school. Equipment (e.g. book bags and swimming kit) should be prepared the night before.

- Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
- Talk positively about going to school.
- If required to do so, work with the school and local authority to help them understand any barriers to good attendance/punctuality.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- If your child is on an attendance support plan /attendance contract, ensure they undertake the actions that have been agreed.
- Monitor your child's internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.
- **Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances, please visit our school office/contact the pastoral team to complete the correct documentation and a decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not. A copy of our leave of absence/exceptional circumstances form can also be downloaded from the [attendance page of our school website](#).**

4.6 Role of Pupils

- Speak to your class teacher, the pastoral team or another member of staff if you are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on your attendance. You can also share any worries via our [Bedford Worry Box](#) on our school website.
- Attend all your lessons on time, ready to learn and with the appropriate learning equipment.
- Follow the school procedure if you arrive late. This will help the school to monitor your attendance and keep accurate records. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.
- If on an attendance support plan /attendance contract, ensure (with support of key trusted adults) that they undertake the actions that have been agreed.

5. Understanding Types of Absence

5.1 Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

5.2 Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session.'

5.3 Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

5.4 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

5.5 Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- absences which have never been properly explained.
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U' registration code. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session.
- shopping trips.
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- their own or family birthdays.
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- day trips.
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

6. Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

6.1 A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and cooperation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are defined as a persistent absentee.

6.2 A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

7. Absence Procedures

OUR DUTY TO KEEP IN TOUCH

If a child is absent and no message is received, staff within school will assume that your child is absent without your permission. The school pastoral team will then make every effort to contact you:

1	First day response calls In order to safeguard our pupils, 'First Day Response' contact is made as soon as morning registers close. We will attempt to contact you via the emergency contact numbers held on our Arbor information system. This may mean that wider family members/other contacts are also contacted if contact with parent/carers is unsuccessful. We may also send follow-up texts/emails/letters.
2	Home visits Wherever possible, we will also complete home visits if we are unable to make contact with any of our families regarding a pupil absence. Please do not be alarmed if we ask to see the pupil - it is in the interests of safeguarding and our policy to do so. If we are unable to make contact during a home visit, a letter detailing the date/time of our visit will be delivered.
3	Welfare checks It is our policy to request a welfare check from Merseyside Police if a child has been absent for a number of days (without a known reason) and every opportunity to contact parents, carers and family members has been exhausted. The safety of each and every one of our pupils is paramount.

Once contact has been made with the parent, school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be deemed "missing from education."

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS



It is absolutely vital that we have at least two emergency contact numbers to reach you in the case of your child being absent. so that they are able to verify each absence. It is also essential that we are kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. Parents/carers can use our Arbor app to check and submit any changes to personal details.

MY CHILD CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL

What do do if your child cannot attend school:

	Medical/dental appointments	Unless absolutely unavoidable, we ask that parents/carers support us by making routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours. Where such appointments in school time cannot be rescheduled or avoided, parents should inform the school in advance. Written evidence of the appointment will be requested e.g. an official appointment card, letter etc. We can only authorise unavoidable appointments that take place during school hours.
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MY CHILD IS POORLY

It can be really tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell. Below is a really useful link to some NHS/government guidelines to help you determine whether your child is well enough to attend school.

[Should I keep my child off school checklist poster \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

- Please contact us on the first day of absence before 8.55 am when our registers close.

Registration		
Morning registers	Whole school	Registers close at 8.55 am
Afternoon registers (between 12.30 and 1.30 due to staggered lunchtimes)	Reception classes Year 1 classes Years 3 & 4 Year 2 Years 5 & 6	12.30pm 12.45pm 12.50pm 1pm 1.30pm

	1st day of any absence	Contact us via phone and speak to a member of the pastoral/attendance team. Please let us know the reason for your child's absence and an anticipated return date. We have an answer phone service available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before deciding as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised.
	Any additional days of any absence	Continue to keep school updated on a daily basis via phone, email or Arbor.
 	Medical evidence	Schools hold the right to request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell or if there are multiple periods of absence. We will always request medical evidence if: • The pupil has attended a medical or dental appointment • A pupil's absence has extended beyond 3 days • A pupil's attendance is below 90% (on the persistent absence register) In this instance, absences (regardless of the number of days) will not be authorised without written medical evidence. Medical evidence may include a: • medical appointment card with one appointment entered, • slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by GP Receptionist • letter from a professional, doctor's note, • medication prescribed by a doctor/ copy of prescription • Official appointment letters/medical notes/hospital discharge information. • any other relevant evidence. When requested, we may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

	Ongoing, complex or long-term health concerns	Where a pupil's individual and ongoing health needs means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, we will work in partnership with families and seek medical and professional advice to better understand the needs of the pupil and to identify the best possible support or provision.
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If any absence continues, the following steps will be followed (as appropriate)

- Contact to offer support - we are committed to helping in any way we can
- Signpost you to other supporting agencies or services.
- Write to you at key points if your child's attendance/punctuality is causing a concern.
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion/the attendance team.
- Agree and then share a personalised supportive plan/programme of next steps.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

8. Lateness

8.1 Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

8.2 Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

8.3 The key times with regards to the start and close of the school day for all pupils are as follows:

- **School day/registration starts: 8.45am.** (Entrance gates/doors open shortly before this time from 8.40am)
- Entrance gates/doors close at 8.55am.
- End of the school day: 3.15pm

8.4 How we manage lateness:

1. **The Bedford school day starts at 8.45 when children can begin to come into school and registration begins.**
2. Entrance gates/doors are closed at 8.55am

3. Children arriving after 8.55am are required to come into school via the school office. Your child's name will be recorded on the 'daily late log' - these entries are reviewed daily with a view to removing barriers and providing support.
4. At 9.15, morning registers will close. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U,' but this will **not** count as a 'present mark', and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence.
5. As a 'U' code does not count as a 'present mark', the morning session is deducted from the pupil's attendance %.
6. As with attendance, punctuality is closely monitored and we will always contact you to discuss concerns.
7. From time to time a member of the SLT will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.

8.5 Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may receive a letter or be asked to come into school to meet with our school attendance team but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time - we are here to help and support in any way we can. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

9. Understanding barriers to attendance

9.1 Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, an Early Help Worker or the relevant Local Authority team(s). Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed. At Bedford Primary School we are also ably supported by our Team Around the School (TAS) practitioners. The **Team Around The School (TAS)** approach involves **the right people coming together to ensure that you and your family receive the help you need at the earliest possible point**. Early support and intervention is key. Just some of the areas they can help with (alongside attendance) are shown below. For more information about TAS visit the attendance page on our [school website](#).

9.2 Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils; however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

9.3 Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

9.4 Attendance returns: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). Local authorities must agree the frequency that attendance returns are to be provided with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.

10. Local Authority School Attendance Support Service (SAST)

10.1 The Local Authority School Attendance Support Team (SAST) work both strategically and operationally by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

10.2 Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority/ Local authority School attendance panel.

10.3 Local Authority School Attendance Panel. The purpose of the School Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with representatives from the Local Authority to identify the reasons for absence. The Local Authority Attendance Panel is chaired by a member of the school Attendance Support Service. At the beginning of the meeting introductions are made and the purpose of the panel is explained. Parents/carers are reminded of the legal consequences for them if the pattern of poor school attendance continues.

An action plan in the form of an attendance contract is put in place to try to support an improvement in attendance.

10.4 The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered:

- A supportive action plan in the form of an attendance contract will be agreed.
- An attendance target date for improvement will be set.
- The student's attendance will then be closely monitored for a period of 12 school weeks.
- A decision to apply for an Education Supervision Order

10.5 If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

10.6 First day response – children with a social worker. Our school works in partnership with the LA School Attendance Support Team in delivering a first day response system for children with a Sefton social worker. If children who have an allocated social worker are absent from school, we will contact the family to establish the reason why the child is absent from school.

- 10.7 We will complete the first day response form and request a home visit if we feel this is appropriate. We will also inform the child's social worker/core group and the school and other school settings for siblings as appropriate.
- 10.8 Children with and Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Our school works in partnership with the Local Authority to monitor children's attendance who have an EHCP. We will always discuss their attendance at their annual review.
- 10.9 Children who don't live in Sefton who have an EHCP - Where a pupil in our school has an EHCP and there are any identified significant issues emerging over attendance that we become aware of we will inform Sefton Local Authority who will alert the local authority which maintains the EHCP so that the local authority can consider whether needs continue to be adequately supported through the existing plan. (Appendix 4)

11. School Attendance and the Law

- 11.1 The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.
- 11.2 The definition of a 'parent' may be recognised differently under education law, than family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.
- 11.3 A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.
- 11.4 National Framework for Penalty Notice - There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.
- 11.5 Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

11.6 Penalty Notice - Notice to improve. If the national threshold outlined above has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

11.7 Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the Sefton code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

11.8 They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided to date.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

“There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours.”

11.9 In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

11.10 The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

11.11 It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Sefton Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

- 11.12 Here at Bedford Primary School, 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as: being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short." By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).
- 11.13 The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

12. Deletion from Roll

- 12.1 For any pupil leaving Bedford Primary School, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to complete in-year admission/school transfer paperwork. This provides us with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all our pupils, even those who leave us. Key information with regards to transferring to another Sefton school can be found [here](#). If you are transferring to another authority or require any help/support, please contact the school pastoral team and we will be happy to help with any enquiries.
- 12.2 It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.
- 12.3 Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

13. Request to electively home educate a child

- 13.1 Our school works with the Local Authority to ensure that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education (EHE). We follow up-to-date guidance that is published. If a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan or is open to a social worker we work closely with the Complementary Education Service, SEND and Children's Social Care.

14. Absence data

- 14.1 We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to

the Department for Education daily Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

14.2 We share information and collaborate with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

14.3 Our school is legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

New pupil and deletion returns: notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.

Attendance returns: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.

Sickness returns: providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education.

From September 2025 there will be an e form available for schools to facilitate the sharing of this information to be located on the Sefton Education Services website www.seftoneducation.uk

Appendix 1

Guidance in relation to attendance

[Should I keep my child off school checklist poster](#)

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](http://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

[Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Appendix 2

Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment or is attending entrance exams for another institution (e.g., a new school, college, or university interview)
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Code	Definition	Scenario
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g., due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Code	Definition	Scenario
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school is not satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 3

Helping families to understand the changes to absences from school

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices (from 19th August 2024), the following changes have come into force for the Penalty Notice Fines issued for unauthorised absences/holidays recorded by schools.

WHO MAY BE FINED?

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the absence/holiday receiving 3 separate fines.

NATIONAL THRESHOLD

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of **10 sessions (5 school days)** of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including the **U code** (late after registers close).

For example: a 5-day absence/holiday would meet the national threshold. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

1.

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised term time absence/holiday the fine amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child if paid within **21** days.
£160 if paid between **22-28** days.

2.

(Within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised absence amount will be:

£160 per parent (who allowed the holiday) per child, payable within **28** days.

3.

(Within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice is not issued. Cases may be presented before a Magistrates Court. Prosecution may result in a criminal records and fines of up to **£2,500**.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'

September 2024

Appendix 4

Working with cross border pupils

Early help or Supporting Families Plan		Assessing and putting in place any early help or multi-agency family support plan in cases where LA action is needed sits with the Home LA . Where schools are completing the single assessment or acting as the lead practitioner (but with LA involvement) the school will need to work together with the Home LA.
Children's Social Care		In line with usual processes, any assessment or plan under sections 17 or 47 of the Children Act 1989 sits with the Home LA . For looked-after children, local authorities have a statutory duty to promote the educational attainment of all children in their care, wherever they live or are educated. When a looked-after child is placed out of area, the Virtual School Head of the Home LA should work with Virtual School Heads from other local authorities to support their attendance and additional educational support needs.
Alternative Provision		Responsibility for arranging any alternative provision a pupil requires under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 sits with the Home LA .
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	SEN support	No specific provisions apply, so the expectations of each LA are the same as for a pupil who is not in receipt of SEN support.
	Education, health and care plans (EHCP)	Where a pupil has an EHCP, the School LA should alert the LA which maintains the EHCP about any significant issues emerging over attendance of which it becomes aware, so that the LA can consider whether needs continue to be adequately supported through the existing plan.
Transport		If the child is eligible for free home to school transport under section 508B of the Education Act 1996, responsibility for arranging that travel sits with the Home LA .
Attendance legal intervention	ESO	Either local authority can apply for an ESO, but it will usually be the Home LA that acts as the 'designated LA' and therefore both LAs should discuss and agree before proceeding.
	FPNs	A fixed penalty notice must be issued in line with the code of conduct for the area in which the child goes to school, and if issued by a local authority, it must be the School LA .
	Prosecution	Either local authority has the power to prosecute, but in general it should be the School LA that takes forward prosecutions under s.444(1) and (1A) of the Education Act 1996. It is, however, good practice for the School LA to inform the Home LA that legal action is being taken.