



Attendance Policy 2023-2026

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Attendance is routinely monitored at Full Governing Body meetings

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary in consultation with the school attendance officer

3.3 The Head Teacher and School's Safeguarding Officers are responsible for attendance

The Head Teacher and Schools Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with the attendance officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Providing regular attendance updates to school staff on individual children who hit attendance triggers

The Head Teacher is responsible for attendance and can be contacted via 01525 373019 or office@beaudesert.school

3.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

Teachers must highlight to the Headteacher and Attendance Officer where they begin to have concerns over children's attendance or notice patterns, e.g.: children missing the same days or off on days with certain lessons.

3.5 School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence 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 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

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

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

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 am and will be kept open until 9.00 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30pm for Early Years and KS1 and 1.00 pm for KS2 and will be kept open until 12.45 pm and 1.15 pm respectively.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7) on 01525 373019.

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, or if attendance has dropped below 90% 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. Parents/carers will be notified by phone call and/or letter.

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.

4.3 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 of the appointment. Parents should give as much advance notice as possible, alongside proof of the appointment for example, hospital letter, appointment text message etc.

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 pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

For persistent lateness parents/carers will be contacted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team to understand how improvements in punctuality can be made.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason via a telephone call. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, this is referred to the Senior Leadership Team.
- 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

This includes making reasonable enquiries about pupils who

- Haven't returned to school for 10 days after an unauthorised absence **or**
- Who have been absent for more than 20 days without authorisation
- Contacting parents, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Following local information sharing arrangements, making enquiries to:
- Other local databases and agencies
- Agencies known to be involved with the family
- Where this is a related concern we will check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Checking with the LA and school from which your pupil moved from originally, or any past LAs or schools that have educated your pupil

- Checking with the LA where your pupil lives, if it's different from the one where the school is
- In the case of children of service personnel, checking with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service
- Conducting a home visit, following your own policies and risk assessment procedures. If appropriate, making enquiries with neighbours and relatives

There are many circumstances where a child may become absent from education for prolonged periods and on repeated occasions, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Looked after Children
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during parents' evenings where there is an area of concern.

If absence does not improve we will write to parents, who will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss support measures to increase attendance.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The head Teacher 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 Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances beyond the control of the parent/carer e.g. a family funeral.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only

when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

With regard to holidays in term time the law states parents do not have a legal right to take their child out of school in order to go on holiday. Schools can only authorise if the request is made at least four weeks in advance and when there are exceptional circumstances. Central Bedfordshire guidelines clearly state that the following are not to be considered exceptional circumstances:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- The availability of the desired accommodation
- Adverse weather during the school holiday period
- An overlap at the beginning or end of the school term.

We also take into consideration your child's attendance record, the length of school time that will be missed and whether any previous leave of absence requests have been made.

Where a term-time absence is not authorised, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued and a letter will be sent to parents to inform them of this.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 per child within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where a suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Attendance Monitoring

See appendix 9

6.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly at an individual level and half termly with the school Attendance Officer.
- The Head Teacher works conjunctively with the Attendance Officer to monitor children whose attendance is of a concern

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 Body.

6.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- 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

6.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance updates to class teachers and other school staff, 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

6.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil attends school for 90% or less time and severe absence is where a pupil attends 85% or less time of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence for individual pupils
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- A referral will be made to the relevant child welfare bodies if absence fall or child is absence falls below 90%.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the SLT. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Lateness/Punctuality Letter



Leighton Buzzard
LU7

Date

Dear

Lateness/Punctuality

I am writing to you because ***** has arrived late on ***** occasions since the *****

For your children's year group, school starts at 08:40am every day. Children need to be in their class at 08:40am, when the second bell rings. Children who arrive late are at a disadvantage because they miss starting the day with their peers and most importantly, they miss the beginning of our 'Bright Start' sessions. These are short, cognitive sessions that improve children's learning ability for the entire day.

It is also very important for children to establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. We feel strongly that punctuality is a life skill that they need to develop whilst they are young.

High levels of Unauthorised Absences or poor punctuality can result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Service or other agencies which have a duty to investigate further and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when you are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions please make sure that you contact the school office to inform us when you will arrive.

If you are experiencing difficulties with punctuality and would like to discuss this with me, please make an appointment to do so. I can assure you that we are here to support you so that your child has the most positive, successful learning experience in school as possible.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Pearce
Head Teacher

Appendix 3: Attendance below 90% Non-statutory age letter



Leighton Buzzard
LU7

Date

Dear

Attendance below 90%

Throughout the school year the Local Authority Attendance Officer checks on every pupil's attendance and has highlighted XXXX absences. Although they are aware XXXX does not reach statutory school age until XXX, they have requested us to notify you that since September he/she has had XX days absent and we have attached the reasons that you have reported.

Pupils who miss even 1 or 2 days a month can fall behind in their learning and we want to support you in any way with XXX attendance so we can ensure he moves above the 90% (currently XXX) in this last term.

Please can you contact the school to arrange a meeting with me on telephone number 01525 373019, to see how we can support you to address any potential issues before they become a pattern or problem for your child.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa Pearce
Headteacher
Beaudesert Lower School

Appendix 4: Attendance below 90% - Statutory school age letter



Leighton Buzzard
LU7

Date

Dear

Attendance below 90%

Throughout the school year the Local Authority Attendance Officer checks on every pupil's attendance and has highlighted XXXX absences. They have requested us to notify you that since September XXX has had XX days absence and we have attached the reasons that you have reported.

Pupils who miss even 1 or 2 days a month can fall behind in their learning. Whilst we understand children do get unwell we want to support you in any way with XXX attendance so that we can ensure he/she moves above the 90% in this current term. Attendance is currently

If you wish to discuss or feel you need further support please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone number 01525 373019, to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa Pearce
Headteacher
Beaudesert Lower School

Appendix 5: Absences in term time letter



Leighton Buzzard
LU7

Dear

Re: Absence in term time

I am writing with reference to your application for leave of absence for ***** on the *****

Typically, when parents arrange family holidays during term time there is a significant impact on a child's education:

- There can be a gap in the understanding of a subject
- Lessons and extra-curricular activities are missed
- The continuity of projects is lost
- It can impact on friendship groups
- The rigour and discipline of attending school is disrupted

For these reasons the government introduced legislation that came into force on the 1st September 2013 preventing Head Teachers from authorising holidays in terms time unless **under exceptional extenuating circumstances**.

This situation does not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Consequently, I regret that I am unable to authorise this absence. This will be coded as an unauthorised holiday.

If a child accrues a total of 5 days unauthorised absence within a 12-week period the Access and Inclusion team at Central Bedfordshire Council will be notified and they will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of £60 per parent, per child.

Due to the number of days' absence requested, the Access and Inclusion team will be notified and will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per parent per child.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Pearce
Headteacher

Leaflet - A Guide to Non-school Attendance Penalty Notices

Information for Parents/Carers (rev.Oct 2015)

Introduction

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered. Parents can help to ensure regular attendance by:

- encouraging their children to attend school regularly and on time; □ taking an interest in their children's education and life at school; □ communicating with their children's school in order to discuss any emerging issues or problems;
- notifying their children's school on the first day of any absence; □ not arranging any family holidays during term time.

Some children, unfortunately, fail to attend school regularly. The Council has a number of legal powers which it can use to address this. Included among these powers is the authority, under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, to issue Penalty Notices to parents whose children fail to attend school regularly.

When a Penalty Notice may be issued

In Central Bedfordshire schools and academies may ask the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice may be issued when:

- a pupil is taken out of school during term time for a holiday which has not been authorised by the school;
- ;
- a child's school attendance has been poor and his/her school believe that the issuing of a Penalty Notice may lead to an improvement in the child's attendance (for example, when a child is persistently late for school and his/her parents fail to address the situation).

When a Penalty Notice is issued it is issued on a per child/per parent basis. This means that if a mother and father have two children and take both children out of school they may be issued with a total of 4 Penalty Notices – one to each parent for each child.

Issuing a Penalty Notice A Penalty Notice can be issued:

- when the number of unauthorised absences a child has had amounts to at least 10 sessions (5 days) during a 12-school week period.

Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, there is no statutory right of appeal, although there are circumstances in which the council may withdraw the Notice.

Payment of Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice is initially for £60. If this £60 is not paid within 21 days from the date of issue it rises to £120. If after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid the council will prosecute the parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to an appearance in the magistrate's court and may result in a fine of up to £2,500 and / or 3 months imprisonment.

Parental Responsibility

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

Contact details

For more information about Penalty Notices or any other issues related to school attendance please contact the Access and Inclusion Service on 0300 300 4953.

Access & Inclusion, Central Bedfordshire Council, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1LF