



Pennine Academies Yorkshire

Attendance Policy 2023

POLICY HISTORY

Version: V01
Date written: 08 February 2023
Ratified by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER 03 May 2023
Approved by (signature): 
Chief Executive Officer
Date issued: 03 May 2023
Responsibility of: TRUST or HEADTEACHER
Review period: 3 years
Date to be reviewed: 01 February 2026
Requires staff to: READ
Upload to academy website : YES

KEY AMENDMENTS TO THIS POLICY

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1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Pennine Academies Yorkshire believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Ms Jarockyj and can be contacted via e.jarockyj@chps.paymat.org. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees have overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the schools.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school

day.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Encourage regular attendance by supporting the values of good attendance
- Inform the school by telephone on the first day of their child's absence by 09.00am and on any subsequent days.
- Alert the school office of any planned absences/medical procedures well in advance.
- Support the academy with their child in achieving 100% attendance each year.
- Avoid taking their child out of academy for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at the school punctually and prepared for the academy day (including extra-curricular activities).

PLEASE NOTE: holidays are not deemed exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

4. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8:40am and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 8:30am. Pupils will have a morning break at 10:15am, which will last until 10:30am, and a lunch break at 12:10pm, which will last until 1:00pm – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to

recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8:40am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:10am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at 1:10pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

Parents and pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone, using the absence recording line, before 8:30am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and continue to report the absence daily until the child returns.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than three school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, the school will inform the LA, on a half termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

6. ATTENDANCE REGISTER

The school uses the management information system, Arbor, to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who

made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. FREQUENT & CONTINUING ABSENCE

A courtesy phone call will be made if your child continues to be absent if you have not notified us further. Contact may be attempted via all of the emergency contacts we hold for your child. If we have not been able to make contact, we may make a doorstep visit with members of the school attendance team to offer any further support.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of lateness or absence, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/carer. The school will seek advice from the attendance team, linked Inclusion Officer (formally Education Welfare Officer) or Early Help Hub.

8. AUTHORISING PARENTAL ABSENCE REQUESTS

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. 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. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

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 percent 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.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching.

The pupil will receive education that amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

9. LEAVE DURING LUNCHTIMES

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Headteacher – it is at the Headteacher’s discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunchtime and their child’s behaviour when not on the school premises. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the Headteacher will ensure a lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil’s name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Headteacher’s decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

10. TRUANCY

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil’s learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:40am and 1:00pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11. MISSING CHILDREN

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - all classrooms
 - all toilets
 - changing rooms
 - the library
 - any outbuildings
 - the school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

12. ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

13. WORKING WITH PARENTS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Attendance Officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Attendance Officer will work with the Headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Attendance Officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or

authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

14. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, 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 PA 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 or IHP 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 percent, 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 PA 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 PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15. LEGAL INTERVENTION

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 fixed penalty notice in line

with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, from the 01 April 2023 the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution through the magistrates court in the following situations:

- 1) A continuous period of unauthorised leave of 20 school days (40 sessions) or more.
- 2) Two or more periods of unauthorised leave totalling 10 school days (20 sessions) or more within a 12 month period.

16. MONITORING AND ANALYSING ABSENCE

The Attendance Officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Attendance Officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Attendance Officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Attendance Officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Trustees will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of Trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

17. TRAINING OF STAFF

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The school will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The school will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the Attendance Officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance. Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

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

19. PENALTY NOTICES

Up-dated 07 March 2023 from the Local Authority:

NEW - LEGAL ACTION FOR EXTENDED / MULTIPLE UNAUTHORISED LEAVE DURING TERM TIME

The Local Authority recognise that this is a significant issue for Bradford schools, with double the rate of absences due to unauthorised leave during term time being taken in Bradford compared to the national average. In an effort to try and address this issue, the council will be utilising some of the other legal options available to them to try and get across the message of how important it is that children attend school regularly at the start of the new term in April.

From 1st April 2023, the LA will consider legal action through the magistrates court as opposed to penalty notices in the following situations:

- 1) A continuous period of unauthorised leave of 20 school days (40 sessions) or more
- 2) Two or more periods of unauthorised leave totalling 10 school days (20 sessions) or more within a 12 month period.

NB – A period of leave which spans across two half terms will be treated as one period of leave.

This means that parents may be liable to receive a significantly higher fine (up to **£2,500 per child, per parent**) if found guilty, as well as receive a criminal record, which may be reportable to employers (for example, via a DBS Check). In rare circumstances, magistrates can consider a custodial sentence for up to 3 months.

The Local Authority Inclusion Service may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carers for their child's unauthorised absence and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carers for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Circumstances when a penalty notice may be issued:

Poor Attendance

Criteria: A pupil has 6 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in the 6 weeks (60 Sessions) prior to a notice being requested and their attendance has not been below 80% (24 sessions of absence) in the last 12 weeks (120 Sessions) prior to a notice being requested.

Requests will not be considered where the request is made more than 6 weeks after the last session of unauthorised absence.

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance are to be used as an early intervention tool to address low level absence concerns before the situation becomes entrenched. Research conducted by the DfE found that penalty notices were most effective when used to address occasional absences where a child's rate of attendance started to fall below 90%. We would encourage schools to make use of this tool, as quite often it's the Penalty Notice Warning Letter that can have the biggest impact in bringing a child's attendance rate back over 90%.

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance should not be used to address entrenched levels of pupil attendance, as they will have little impact. It is for this reason that Bradford Council will not accept poor attendance penalty notice requests where a child's rate of attendance is below 80% in the last 12 weeks. In these situations, schools are encouraged to apply Stage 2 of the Staged Intervention Approach to Attendance to try and address the situation.

OR

Pupils identified by police and Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

Unauthorised Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013, states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days/10 sessions or more and the leave of absence is without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. These unauthorised absences do not need to be consecutive. In these

circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned (e.g. through a warning letter that a fine may be issued as well as reminders in the academy newsletter) that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken. A reminder will be circulated to all parents on a termly basis via academy newsletters.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where unauthorised absences or late arrival after the close of registration occurs on 7 occasions in any six-week period (not including school closures). The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason. With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice Relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

20. CHANGING SCHOOLS

An in-year transfer form is available from the academy office and should be completed by the parent and Headteacher prior to transfer. Pupils' records are sent to the new school. If they fail to attend on the anticipated start date the family will be referred to the local authority tracking officer.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is an evidence-based approach designed to help organisations ensure that their policies, practices, events and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation.

Appendix A - Absence Guidance

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling:

The legislation requires that all children, from babies until they cease to be of compulsory school age, be licensed by the local authority in which they live, when they take part in a performance on stage or in a broadcast.

A child remains subject to these regulations until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they turn 16. The academic year runs from 1 September – 31 August inclusive.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport:

Parents of able sports players can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the academy, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding the academy for a number of reasons: difficulties with work; friendship problems; family difficulties. It is important that the reason for your child's reluctance to attend the academy is identified early and work together to tackle the problem. For some children the extra support of familiar staff may be called upon. In addition, it may also be helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

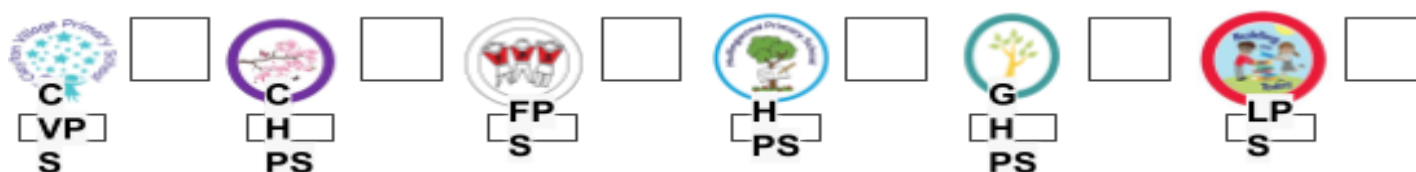
Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education. Let them know that there is support at the academy, either from their class teacher or other trusted adults. Encourage them to seek out a member of staff who they feel comfortable with to talk through any worries or concerns that they have which is preventing them from coming to the academy or as a parent/carer, contact the academy and request this on your child's behalf. Be interested in what your child is doing, chat to them about the things they have learnt, the friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

Appendix B - Request for Leave of Absence Form

Parents are asked to consider very carefully the implications for their own child and others before making a decision to remove their child from the education that is provided in academy term time. Children should only be removed in **exceptional circumstances**. These circumstances and the factors to be taken into account by parents considering such absence are given overleaf. If you intend for your child to be absent, please complete the form below and submit to the academy with **at least two weeks' notice**.

The academy is required to record all absences as **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. The decision is based on the information given below. Should a parent who is considering an absence wish to discuss the implications, please contact the academy office to make an appointment to see the Headteacher. Pennine Academy Trust follows Local Authority guidelines regarding Penalty Notices. Penalty Notices are issued in instances of unauthorised leave of absence in term time of 5 days/10 sessions (or more) within the preceding designated period (this need not be consecutive) without the authorisation of the school. The Penalty Notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, per period of absence if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in a summons being served to appear at the Magistrates Court.

Please indicate which academy:



Please complete the following after you have read the attached guidance, and send to the academy office:

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____

Date of Absence(s): From _____ To _____ Total number of days: _____

For appointments during the school day:

Time of Appointment: _____ Time child to be collected: _____ Time child will return: _____

Please tick the appropriate box for the type of absence and give the reason for this absence request below:

Medical/Dental appt *	Authorised		Religious Observance	Authorised	
Interview/Visit to another school	Authorised		Holiday	Unauthorised	
Special Occasion (specify reason below)	Usually Unauthorised		Compassionate Leave (specify reason below)	May be authorised	

* If you are taking your child out of school for a medical appointment, you will need to provide a copy of the appointment letter/text.

Reason for absence request:

I have considered the implications for both my child and others in making this decision.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Academy Use: Authorised ____ Unauthorised ____ Child's attendance level over the last 12 months: _____

Signed: _____ (Headteacher) Date: _____

Guidance for Parents on Pupil Attendance

We recognise that there are some genuine difficulties and tensions for parents when they make a decision to take their child out of school. The following information is offered to help.

Why keep your child in school?

Some areas to consider are:

- Children have a right to the education that is planned and provided by school;
- Taking a child out of school can be disruptive to the child concerned both at the time, before and after the event;
- Children away from school miss the learning that has been planned. Many learning experiences cannot be packaged and sent home and are part of ongoing programmes. For this reason, children's progress may be interrupted;
- Confidence and self-esteem may be dented as some children can feel separated from their class because the experiences of the class have moved forward without them;
- A high number of absences in a class impact on the general level and pace of learning. Teaching may need to be adjusted for the whole class as foundations for the next stage may have been undermined by the absence of several children;
- There are 175 non-school days a year to spend on holidays, shopping and appointments. There are 190 school days a year.

Why take your child out of school?

There may be genuinely exceptional reasons for taking a child out of school as listed overleaf. The Pennine Academy Trust policy is that absence for other reasons is not authorised.

If, after taking all the factors above into account, parents decide to take their child out of school for other than exceptional reasons as described, the parents should take responsibility for this decision and appreciate that their child's absence will be regarded as Unauthorised.

All of the Pennine Academy Trust academies seek to provide the very best learning experience for your children and this principle is behind our policy on time out of academies. We hope this is helpful and our Headteachers are very happy to discuss individual circumstances with you.

Advice and support are available from the Pennine Academy Trust Inclusion Welfare Officers, or by contacting your Local Authority Education Office.

Stage One – School Attendance Staged Intervention Model

