

Attendance and Absence Policy

Reviewed by:	Full Governing Board will go to Pupil Development, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee in future
Signed (Governing Board):	
Date:	Sept 2026
Next Review due:	Sept 2027

Turton School will provide an environment in which every student feels valued, cared for, and welcomed. The school's ethos will demonstrate that students feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that follow up action will be taken. We recognise the clear link between the attendance of students and their progress. The aim of this policy, therefore, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance (190 days per year) for individual students within the school. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is essential in order for students to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing a strong link between excellent attendance & excellent examination results alongside a positive wellbeing. In order to achieve this, all members of our school community have an important contribution to make.

1. Aims

To work in partnership to ensure all young people have an excellent level of attendance. Our school target is for each student to have an attendance score of 98% or above.

To promote 100% attendance across the school community.

To promote 100% punctuality across the school community.

To ensure we have clear and robust procedures for registration ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students.

To have clear systems and structures for analysing our attendance and punctuality data to inform pastoral intervention.

To have a staged approach to attendance and punctuality intervention to support young people and families.

To proactively address persistent absenteeism. To prevent it from occurring through early help and to intervene swiftly if it arises. (Below 90%, attendance is classed nationally as persistently absent from school).

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- 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.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance lead role.
- 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 lead 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.

Parents are responsible for:

- 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.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

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

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 every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

Attend school punctually.

Attend every timetabled lesson.

The school day starts at 8.50am for everyone except P band students who start 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 8.45am.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

The morning registration period will close at 9:20am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as a U Code, (U). The absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless there is an exceptional circumstance that the school is able to authorise. If a student arrives after registration closes and receives 10 U code marks in 10 weeks, parents/carers will receive a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority.

The afternoon register will be marked by 1pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time

Class teachers will also take informal registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. These registers will be analysed alongside formal registers in line with the section of this policy.

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

The school Attendance Officer is Caroline Kerr. Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone or by email to attendance@turton.uk.com before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

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 via email as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does 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.

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.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 85 percent, the Attendance Engagement Officer, Lizzy Barlow or pastoral leader will arrange a formal meeting with the pupil and their parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Where a pupil is reported as absent due to illness immediately following a school holiday, the school may request appropriate medical evidence to support the absence. Absences following a holiday that are reported as illness will not automatically be authorised. The decision to authorise an absence will be made by the school in accordance with the school's attendance policy and applicable statutory guidance.

6. 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 attendance lead, Natalie Parry – 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.

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 attendance in writing by email or letter addressed to Miss N Parry, Assistant Head Teacher 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 will not grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

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/carers are asked to make every effort to arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for registration and be collected at the appropriate time for their appointment.

Where a medical appointment takes place during the morning, pupils are expected to return to school in time for the afternoon registration wherever reasonably possible. Similarly, pupils with an afternoon appointment should attend school for the morning session.

Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

A medical appointment will not normally be accepted as a reason for a pupil's absence for the entire school day where the pupil could reasonably attend school for part of the day. Appropriate evidence of the appointment will be requested.

Performances and activities, including paid work

By law, children of compulsory school age who take part in paid or professional performance work (including film, television, theatre, or modelling) must have a Child Performance Licence issued by the local authority. As part of this process, the school must give consent for any absence.

In line with national regulations, students may not miss more than **5 school days in any academic year** for the purposes of performance or filming, unless the local authority grants an exemption and alternative education arrangements (such as tutoring provided by the production company) are in place. Any request for absence for this purpose must be submitted to the Headteacher in advance, together with a copy of the Child Performance Licence.

Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

School has not given approval in advance for a student to be absent.

School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence.

No explanation of absence is received.

The Governing Board have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence.

Parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice as part of the Attendance Strategy process once their child has had 6 sessions of unauthorised absence.

After 6 sessions of absence, each parent/carer will receive a Warning Notice informing them that their child must have no more unauthorised absences. If there is no improvement in attendance and / or punctuality (after the register has closed), it could lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice once 10 sessions are reached.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority to the family home. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £60 per parent, per child. Non-payment of the Penalty within the 28 days' time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

7. Term-Time Holidays and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

In line with the Department for Education's national framework, effective from 19 August 2024, schools cannot authorise holidays during term time. Any absence of this nature will be recorded as unauthorised. Where a pupil has accumulated 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within a 10-school-week period, parents/carers may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) by the Local Authority. The penalty is currently £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second FPN for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be £160 with no early payment discount. Should there be a further offence, the matter will be referred directly for prosecution, which may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a community order, or imprisonment.

8. Religious Observance in Term Time

The school will authorise absence that is due to religious observance, but the day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body. The school may only allow one day of authorised absence under these circumstances. All requests for leave due to religious observance must be made in advance and in writing to the Headteacher.

9. Emergency closure, e.g. snow days / pandemic

If the school is to be closed on any school day because of adverse weather conditions or a particular problem on the school site, we will update the school website (www.turton.uk.com) with the relevant information.

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.

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out with the attendance officer 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 attendance officer is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

11. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build 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. children's services and the Early Intervention Team.

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 and pastoral leaders 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.

Home visits may be undertaken where there are concerns regarding a pupil's attendance, welfare, safeguarding or engagement with education. The decision to undertake a home visit will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration factors including the level and pattern of absence, any known safeguarding concerns or vulnerabilities, the pupil's individual circumstances, and the level of parental/carers engagement.

There is no fixed frequency or threshold for home visits. They form part of the school's graduated, proportionate and supportive response to attendance concerns. Where concerns increase, attendance does not improve, or there is limited or no contact with the family, the school may increase the frequency of home visits and other attempts to engage with parents/carers.

12. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

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

The attendance engagement officer will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends.

The attendance engagement 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 engagement officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

13. Penalty Notices

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and can be issued when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (O/ U codes which is equivalent of 5 days consecutive or otherwise) over two consecutive half terms. A separate Penalty Notice can be issued for each parent per child. You have to pay a fine but you do not have to appear in Court. You also have to make sure that your child's attendance at school improves. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

Is a warning given?

The school will send you a formal letter of warning telling you that a Penalty Notice may be issued. This warning letter will also include details of your child's absences. If you receive a warning letter this is an opportunity for you to work with the school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice.

Your child must have no further unauthorised absences from school from the date of the letter. If your child's unauthorised absence continues and reaches 10 sessions (5 school days) or more, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning may be issued. This depends on each individual case. However, the school is not required to send a warning letter where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.

What are the costs?

£80 if you pay within 21 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice or £160 if you pay after this but within 28 days (per parent, per child).

Is there an appeal process?

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

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay in full within 28 days, Bolton Council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child. If proven this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on individual circumstances.

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

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. A prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending on your circumstances. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. If the poor school attendance persists, the Local Authority may also consider prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

What can I do?

Ensure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and for your child. Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school. If you suspect your child is not happy in school, you should contact the school as soon as possible. Take an interest in your child's education, ask about their day, praise and encourage achievements at school.

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

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

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

Appendix 1 – Register codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on attendance

Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed
Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
Code W: Attending work experience
Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity
Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
Code D: Dual registered at another school
Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Code R: Religious observance
Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded
Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Code G: Holiday not granted by the school
Code N: Reason for absence not yet established
Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Appendix 2

Parent/Carer Guidance - Every lesson counts. Improving attendance, raising attainment.

Why regular attendance is important

Students who fail to attend regularly experience educational and social disadvantage at school and their future life prospects can be impaired. They can also be at risk of drifting into antisocial and criminal behaviour. Student absence can also disrupt teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same learning environment.

To ensure your child reaches his / her full potential it is particularly important that you make sure your child attends regularly and punctually. Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved through close communication between the school, the parent and the child. Once we know that your child is having problems, we will try to resolve them.

What is good attendance?

If your child has an attendance rate below 95% please ensure that everything possible is done to improve it. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, anything below 90% is deemed persistently absent by the government and becomes a concern. Students will be closely monitored by the school pastoral team. You may be invited in for a formal meeting with the school. Students whose attendance does not subsequently improve may be referred to the Early Intervention Team for intervention. Attendance can be placed into context in the table below:

Attendance	95%	90%	85%	80%
Number of days lost learning in an academic year	9.5	19	28.5	38
Number of lessons lost learning for a 5 period day	47.5	95	142.5	190

Is 95% attendance good?

This means your child has still missed nearly 10 school days in one year. Over five years that would be nearly 50 days, this is almost a school term. Research suggests that '17 missed school days a year equals a drop in a grade in GCSE achievement'- DfE.