

TOTTINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Purple highlighting identifies every addition or amendment.

Next review: October 2027, or sooner if guidance or school arrangements change.

Date Written:	July 2023
Updated:	September 2024
Updated:	September 2026

Overview

For the children in school to get the best out of their education here at Tottington Primary School, it is important that they have a consistently high level of attendance and punctuality and therefore a full-time education. It is known that high attendance rates can positively impact a student's achievement and overall school performance. As the children grow and head toward their transition to High School, and after that employment, they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important and valuable qualities. Where children are not meeting these expectations, we will put into place effective strategies to ensure that they and their families are encouraged, helped and supported into doing so. This policy outlines the expectations, procedures, and responsibilities related to attendance for all stakeholders involved, including students, staff, parents, and the wider school community.

This policy reflects Prestolee Multi Academy Trust's Attendance Strategy, the DfE's expectations and Bury Local Authority's guidelines and adheres to the latest UK government legislation and guidelines related to school attendance, including but not limited to:

- Education Act 1996
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which replaced the 2006 registration regulations from 19 August 2024.
- Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- This policy also has regard to the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended in 2024, the Children and Families Act 2014, the current DfE Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance, and associated safeguarding, children missing education and medical-needs guidance. The Trust and school must have regard to the statutory attendance guidance. Source references are provided at the end of this policy.

Attendance Expectations

Pupils are expected to attend every session, for its full duration, unless a statutory reason applies. The school's 95% monitoring threshold is an early-warning measure, not an entitlement to miss 5% of school or a national definition of good attendance. Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible sessions, equivalent to attendance of 90% or below. Severe absence means missing 50% or more, equivalent to attendance of 50% or below. These measures include authorised and unauthorised absence. We will identify barriers and offer help early, without waiting for a threshold to be reached. The school will continue working with families and Prestolee Multi Academy Trust to improve attendance and punctuality.

Policy Principles & Purpose

- To ensure children attend school regularly.
- To ensure children's overall attendance percentage is at the highest possible level.
- To put into place effective strategies to manage and promote high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure children arrive at school on time.
- To embed attendance and punctuality into the fabric an ethos of the children and parents at school.
- To work actively and positively in engaging with parents to ensure their children attend school regularly, at a high percentage and on time.
- To refer to children and/or families to other outside agencies for support where appropriate and where extra help or intervention may improve punctuality and/or attendance.
- To understand and respond effectively to each child's unique circumstances regarding their attendance at school and to ensure this is part of any strategy used to encourage a high level of attendance.
- To ensure that record keeping of attendance and punctuality are accurate and up to date at all times.
- To analyse all data kept identifying any trends, areas or concern or improvements required.
- To track, monitor and effectively engage with any children and families who are falling below expected levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To work effectively and collaboratively with the Local Authority, school nursing team and other outside agencies to ensure that a full understanding and approach is taken to all instances of poor punctuality and/or attendance.
- To ensure that improvement in attendance considers the underlying causes of lateness and/or poor attendance and to take steps, wherever possible, to mitigate these and remove any barriers to punctuality and/or attendance.
- Our approach is to set clear expectations, monitor attendance, listen to pupils and families, remove barriers, provide and review support, and formalise support or consider proportionate legal action where appropriate. Attendance is a whole-school responsibility and is linked to safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, anti-bullying, wellbeing and the curriculum.

Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance:

The Headteacher, Deborah Taylor, is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in the school. This individual will oversee the implementation of the attendance policy and ensure that all staff members are aware of their responsibilities.

Deborah Taylor is the school's Senior Attendance Champion. She will lead the attendance strategy, ensure consistent daily procedures, oversee targeted support, evaluate its impact and report to governors and the Trust. The Headteacher, office and pastoral contacts listed

below can be reached through the school office on 01204 886169 or tottington@prestoleetrust.org. Parents should use the telephone absence-reporting arrangements below for an unexpected absence.

Staff Contacts for Attendance:

The school will provide the name and contact details of the staff members who students and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis. This may include a form teacher, attendance officer, or other designated staff members. Additionally, the school will provide information and contact details for staff members who can provide more detailed support on attendance, such as a head of year, pastoral lead, or family liaison officer.

Attendance Contacts:

School Office:	Mrs Foley & Miss Royle
Attendance Coordinator:	Miss Royle
Pastoral Care:	Mrs Harrison
Responsible Governor:	Mr Holly
Classroom :	Class Teachers

Miss Royle will liaise with our pastoral lead and class teachers and where necessary on a daily basis to identify children who are late, absent or showing signs of persistent lateness and/or absence. This will then be fortified by pastoral meetings between Mrs Harrison and class teachers, a half termly meeting between Mrs Harrison & Mrs Turnbull to discuss actions necessary going forward. These actions may include telephone calls home, home visits, letters home and meetings with Mrs Harrison & Mrs Turnbull or the Head Teacher.

Governors and the Trust board will oversee this policy in accordance with the Trust's scheme of delegation, assure themselves that statutory duties are met, and scrutinise attendance, persistent and severe absence, pupil-group differences and the impact of support. They will consider attendance for pupils with SEND and long-term health needs, ensure suitable staff training and resources, and share effective practice across the Trust. Termly school reporting will support this scrutiny; urgent concerns will be escalated sooner.

All staff will receive appropriate attendance training. Class teachers will maintain accurate registers, build positive relationships and share emerging concerns promptly. Office staff will follow up unexplained absence and maintain accurate records. The pastoral lead, SENCO and DSL will coordinate support where relevant. Parents should keep emergency contacts up to date, report absence promptly, seek leave in advance and work with school on agreed support; pupils' views will be heard in an age-appropriate way.

Promotion & Celebration of Attendance & Punctuality

Tottington Primary School is committed to providing a full educational experience for all children. For a good education, we firmly believe that good attendance and punctuality is crucial. As a school, we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. We give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance and the effect on a child's educational and social welfare that can occur when high standards are not met.

In order to achieve this the following strategies are in place;

- Each Friday at our whole school celebration assembly, the class with the best attendance percentage for the week is awarded a certificate
- The school website is updated on a termly basis with the attendance figures for each year group
- Encourage open and honest discussions with parents/carers as to the reasons behind absence and lateness
- Encourage parents/carers to see attendance and punctuality as a priority that is best established early on in a child's development
- At end of each half term attendance certificates will be handed out in assembly to the children whose attendance has been at 100%
- Attendance recognition will be applied sensitively and without discrimination. Alongside the existing celebrations, we will recognise individual improvement and engagement with agreed attendance support. No child will be shamed, disadvantaged or encouraged to attend when medically unfit because of an attendance award. Disability-related barriers and unavoidable medical absence will be considered when reviewing these arrangements.

Attendance Procedures & Systems

Registration

- Gates to school will be open for 8.25am. The school/classroom doors will be open from 8.40am for children to enter and get themselves to their classrooms in time for registration.
- For those children who have been identified as having issues with coming to school our learning mentor will be available for a meet & greet to help give support and encouragement.
- Gates and classroom doors will be closed at 8.45am
- Registration is at 8.45am. Any children who arrive after the gates/doors are closed will need to come through the main school entrance where the office staff will ask for their name, class and reason for their lateness.
- All staff will complete registers accurately for each session and within 15 minutes of the bell going.

- Retaining the policy's 8.45am session start, the morning register closes at 9.00am. A pupil arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.00am is recorded L (late before closure).
- A pupil arriving at or after the 9.00am register closure is recorded U (late after closure) unless another national code properly explains the absence, for example an authorised medical appointment. U counts as unauthorised absence; L does not. The previous 9.25am cutoff is superseded.
- An electronic register will be taken at the start of each morning session and once during every afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils in line with DfE guidance. Actual arrival times and reasons for lateness will be recorded. Sign-in and sign-out arrangements will also show which pupils are on site during the day; these do not replace the statutory register.

Absence due to appointment (medical, dental etc)

- Parents/carers of children who are absent from school must have pre-informed the school of the absence in the case of an appointment.
- Proof of the appointment may be required and a copy may be kept in the case of multiple appointments or as part of a monitoring process.
- If no advance information of the appointment has been given, parents/carers must inform the school before 8.45am as to the nature of the appointment and the expected time that the child will be back in school
- This also applies to appointments that occur during the school day that necessitate an early collection
- School would encourage all appointments to be made, where possible outside, the school day.
- For an agreed medical or dental appointment, code M applies where the pupil is absent at registration. Only the necessary time should be missed and the pupil should attend before or afterwards where practicable. Evidence requests must be proportionate and take account of the family's circumstances.

Absence due to illness

- Parents/carers of children who are absent from school due to illness must call to inform school before 8.45am
- School will ask for details of the illness – this is to ensure compliance with UK Health Security Agency Guidelines on when to keep children off school
- The school contact number is 01204 886169.
- As a school we will endeavour to ask the questions about whether or not a child is able to attend despite illness, for example if they have a cough or cold that could be treated with over the counter medicines/relievers
- Code I applies when physical or mental illness prevents attendance. In most cases a parent's notification is sufficient. There will be no blanket requirement for medical evidence, including solely because attendance falls

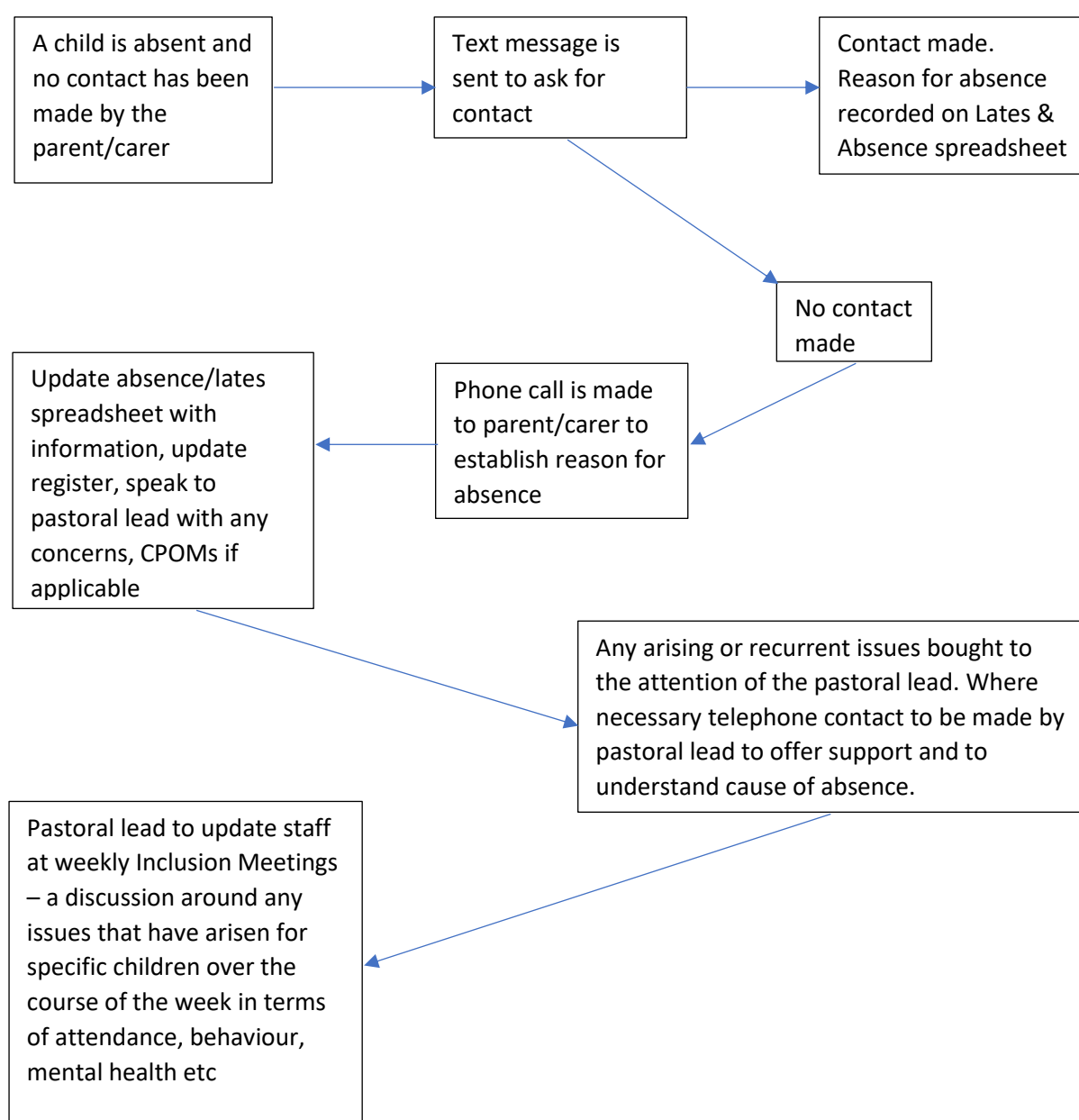
below a percentage threshold. Where there is genuine and reasonable doubt, or prolonged or repeated illness means further understanding is needed to plan support, we may request reasonable evidence. We will speak with the family first and accept appropriate evidence already available, such as prescriptions, appointment information or existing clinical letters; a particular form of evidence will not be insisted upon without considering alternatives. Support and reasonable adjustments will not depend on obtaining a diagnosis first.

- If no reason is yet known, absence will initially be recorded N and followed up promptly. The correct code will be entered as soon as the reason is established, and no later than five working days after the session. If a reason cannot be established within that period, code O will be used. A late telephone call does not automatically make genuine illness unauthorised; coding must reflect the circumstances of the absence.

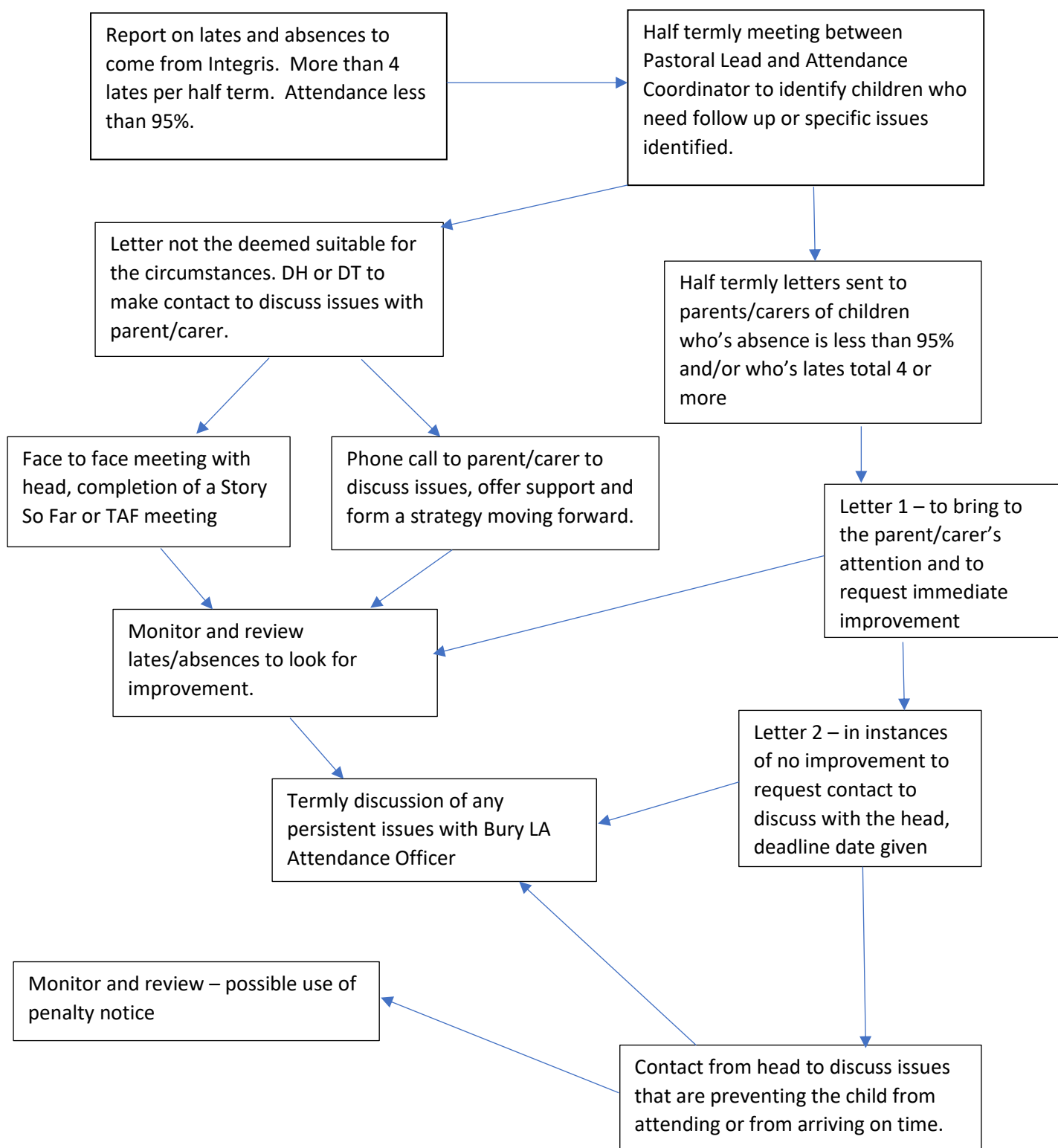
Intervention and Support Systems

The existing flowcharts remain part of this policy. They must be read with the highlighted safeguards: unexplained absence is followed up for every session, emerging patterns are reviewed weekly, safeguarding action is immediate where needed, and letters or sanctions are never automatic substitutes for understanding barriers. References to half-termly meetings do not mean that support waits until those meetings.

1 Child Absent from School



2 Lates & Absences



3 Absence Due to Term Time Holiday

Term time absence can have a seriously detrimental effect on a child's education and social progress and all efforts are made to encourage families to take their holidays during the 91 days of allocated school holidays across an academic year. We follow the Bury Local Authority Guidelines on what are deemed to be 'exceptional circumstances'. These are outlined on our website along with the exceptional leave request form.

The Headteacher will consider every request individually, including its facts, family circumstances and background. No category of event automatically qualifies for exceptional leave. A holiday or other leisure or recreational absence is not generally an exceptional circumstance. Where leave is granted, the Headteacher decides its duration. Other lawful reasons, such as a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body, will be recorded using the applicable national code. The school will consider its relevant equality and Armed Forces Covenant duties when making individual decisions.

- All requests for leave during term time should be made at least 2 weeks prior to taking the time.
- All requests should be made in writing using the Exceptional Leave Request form that can be found on our website (Parent Information/Attendance/Exceptional Leave Request Form) or a hard copy can be obtained from the office.
- Contact will be made by school to inform the parent/carer if the leave is authorised or not.
- <https://www.bury.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-exclusions-and-community-education-team/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools>
- Where unauthorised leave contributes to 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 school weeks, school must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in that individual case, following the National Framework and Bury's code of conduct. A referral is not an automatic fine. The current Bury code is linked in the sources at the end of this policy; the National Framework is explained in section 6 below.

4 Absence of a child with no prior contact

- If a child is not marked on the register at registration and does not then arrive late via the office, contact will be made with the parent/carer
- In the first instance this will be via text message requesting immediate contact to explain the absence
- If this doesn't yield a response a telephone call will be made
- School office will liaise with pastoral care, and if necessary the class teacher and/or Head of School in order to ascertain the next course of action

- Relevant entries will be made and any specific safeguarding concerns and actions recorded on CPOMS
- Home visits may be carried out if it helps the child come into school or where there is a safeguarding issue identified
- Unexplained absence will be followed up on the first day and on subsequent days or sessions while the reason remains unknown. Staff will use available parent and emergency contacts and aim to hold more than one emergency contact where reasonably possible. Concerns about a child's safety or whereabouts will be referred promptly to the DSL; staff will not wait for a routine meeting, five-day coding deadline or ten-day attendance return. Home visits, referral to children's social care or police contact will be based on risk and the school's safeguarding procedures. A pupil's social worker, and youth offending team worker where relevant, will be informed of unexplained absence.

5 Managing & Monitoring Problem and Persistent Absence

Pupil absence and attendance data is collected and analysed each half term and will be put on the website as well as reported to Prestolee Multi Academy Trust, the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Attendance figures are also shared with the governing body.

In addition to half-termly and termly analysis, school will review patterns weekly by pupil, class, year group and relevant cohorts, including SEND, disadvantage, long-term illness, pupils with a social worker, looked-after children and young carers. We will examine lateness, reasons and codes, repeated days and emerging changes, benchmark against appropriate local and national data and evaluate whether interventions improve attendance. Parents will receive understandable information about sessions or days missed and their impact, not just percentages. Published data will be aggregated and must not identify individual children.

Where attendance is declining, and particularly at 90% or below (persistent absence) or 50% or below (severe absence), we will work with the child and family to understand their individual circumstances and barriers. Support will begin before these thresholds where concerns emerge. We will consider:

- What the family circumstance is and what impact this has on attendance
- What efforts if any have the family made to address the situation themselves
- What the family feel we can do to help remove barriers and support
- If any patterns are emerging that are of concern

If needed school will liaise with the Local Authority attendance team to seek their advice and assistance. The Local Authority have provided us with a range of tools that we can use to tackle persistent and severe absence which include;

- Requests for medical evidence

Any request for medical evidence is subject to the proportionate approach in the illness section; evidence will not be a routine condition of support or authorisation.

Attendance contracts (the current DfE term for the arrangements formerly referred to as parenting contracts).

- Story So Far
- Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings
- Child In Need (CIN) meetings
- Multidisciplinary team meetings
- The EBSA Pathway (Emotional Based School Avoidance)

Our prime goal is to ensure that children are in school on time, as often as possible and that lines of communication remain open with families so that we are an active part of the solution. Monitoring of the children who are flagged will continue on a daily and termly basis.

Miss Royle will continue the termly analysis alongside weekly monitoring. For the school's RAG system, 95% and above is green, above 90% but below 95% is amber, and 90% or below is red; 50% or below is additionally flagged as severe absence. A green rating does not rule out a concern or a need for support. We will examine reasons and patterns and agree a proportionate response with the family rather than applying automatic sanctions based on a percentage. Possible actions include:

- Monitoring
- Initial letter
- Second letter requiring contact from the parent/carers
- Pastoral phone call
- Request for a meeting
- Acknowledgement of improvement letter
- Attendance contract, where appropriate and agreed with the parent. This is a supportive written agreement, not a legally binding contract.

Support for persistent and severe absence

We will meet with the pupil and parents to agree an attendance support plan with clear actions, named responsibilities and review dates. We will address in-school barriers and help families access wider support, including early help, health services and Bury's Attendance Support Team. Severe absence will be prioritised for intensive multi-agency support. Support will be reviewed and adapted if it is not working; referrals or waiting lists will not prevent interim help. Safeguarding concerns will be considered on their evidence and referred in line with the safeguarding policy.

SEND and health needs

The SENCO, pastoral lead and staff will work together with families to understand physical and mental health needs, anxiety and SEND-related barriers. We will make reasonable adjustments for disability under the Equality Act 2010 and consider practical changes to routines, arrival, uniform, lunchtime, transport and pastoral support. Agreed provision in an EHCP must be accessible. Where attendance barriers relate to an EHCP, we will involve the local authority and seek review or amendment where necessary. The ambition remains access to suitable full-time education, with individual support rather than a punitive response to unavoidable absence.

Where a child cannot attend because of health needs, school will liaise promptly with the local authority about suitable education under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and support continuity and reintegration. We will make a sickness return when there are reasonable grounds to believe illness absence will reach 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively in the school year; we will not wait for day 15 before acting where this is already foreseeable. Remote education, where appropriate, is a last resort within a reintegration plan and does not count as presence or an approved off-site activity in the attendance register.

Young carers

We will identify and record young carers in the school census and listen to how caring responsibilities affect attendance. School will work with the pupil and family to put support in place and facilitate access to early help and a local authority young carer's needs assessment where appropriate, including where the pupil or parent requests one.

Temporary part-time timetables

A part-time timetable will be used only in very exceptional circumstances, in the pupil's best interests and for the shortest necessary period; it will not be used to manage behaviour. It requires agreement with the parent the child normally lives with, a written support or reintegration plan, agreed attendance sessions, safeguarding arrangements for time out of school, regular reviews with the pupil and parent, and a proposed end date for return to full-time education. The social worker will be involved where applicable and any EHCP-related arrangement discussed promptly with the local authority. For compulsory-school-age pupils, agreed absent sessions are normally recorded C2; sessions they are expected to attend are coded according to actual attendance or the reason for absence. C2 is authorised absence for statistical purposes. Code X is for non-compulsory-school-age pupils not required to attend the session and must not be used to mask absence of compulsory-school-age pupils.

6 Fixed Penalty Notices & Sanctions

The national threshold for considering an attendance penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school weeks, not 10 days. Sessions may be consecutive or combined, including holiday and U-coded lateness, and may span terms or school years. A school week is any week containing at least one school session. Notices relate to compulsory-school-age pupils and may be issued to each parent liable for the offence, usually the parent or parents who allowed the absence. Each case will be assessed individually.

Before referral, school will consider whether appropriate support has been offered, whether it has worked or been engaged with, whether a penalty notice is likely to change parental behaviour, whether another intervention is more suitable, and relevant Equality Act obligations. Support may not be appropriate for an unauthorised term-time holiday. Bury Council will consider referrals under its code of conduct and the National Framework; the authority makes the decision on issuing notices and any subsequent prosecution.

The first attendance penalty notice for the same parent and child is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days, with payment due within 28 days. A second within three years of the first is £160 within 28 days with no reduction. No third notice may be issued for the same parent and child within that three-year period; alternative legal action, potentially prosecution, must be considered. The count applies across schools and local authority areas. Non-payment may result in prosecution for the original attendance offence, not simply for failing to pay the notice.

7 Notice to Improve

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve should usually be sent to give parent a final chance to engage in support.

A Notice to Improve will set out the concerns, support available, the improvement required, the monitoring period and possible consequences. The national improvement period is normally three to six weeks, with Bury's process applied to the individual case. It is not normally required where support is inappropriate, such as an unauthorised holiday, or where an authorised officer judges that it would not affect parental behaviour. We will continue to review support and consider the full range of appropriate interventions, including an attendance contract or education supervision order, in partnership with the local authority.

8 Register management and education away from school

The admission and attendance registers will be kept electronically. Each entry will be retained for six years from the date entered. Amendments must preserve the original entry, revised entry, reason, date and name of the person making the change. National codes will be applied using chapter 8 of the current DfE guidance; records will reflect the reason for each session's absence and will not be altered to improve reported figures.

School will verify attendance at any commissioned off-site provision and agree same-day notification and follow-up of non-attendance. Code B requires an approved educational activity and suitable supervision, code K applies to qualifying local-authority-arranged provision, and code D applies only to sessions a dual-registered pupil is expected to attend the other registered school. Code D is not appropriate merely because a second registration exists. Working at home, including remote education or agreed flexi-schooling time, must not be recorded as school attendance or code B. The relevant absence code must be used. Codes Q and Y1 to Y7 will be used only where their specific statutory conditions apply, with the reason recorded where required.

School will provide daily attendance data to DfE as required and cooperate with local authority Targeting Support Meetings. We will make the required local authority returns for pupils not attending regularly and for a continuous ten school days of unauthorised absence, at the agreed frequency of at least monthly, alongside sickness returns. New-pupil returns will be made within five days of admission and deletion returns at the time of deletion where required; standard transition exemptions will be applied only where lawful. Data will be shared securely and lawfully for education and safeguarding purposes.

A pupil will be removed from the admission register only where a ground in regulation 9 of the 2024 Regulations is met and the required enquiries and notifications have been completed. Extended absence, a parental request or a move without a confirmed destination does not in itself justify deletion. School will work jointly with the local authority to establish whereabouts and suitable education where a child may be missing education, following current DfE guidance and Bury procedures.

Sources

DfE, Working together to improve school attendance, July 2026: chapters 2 and 3 (school and governance expectations), 5 and 6 (support and legal intervention), and 7 and 8 (registers and codes). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Bury Council, Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence, published code revised September 2024. <https://www.bury.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-exclusions-and-community-education/code-of-conduct>

Tottington Primary School, school day and contact information.

<https://tottingtonprimaryschool.org.uk/The-School-Day/> ;

<https://www.tottingtonprimaryschool.org.uk/contact/>