



# Attendance Policy: Cottingley Village Primary School

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Together we **Exceed**



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# 1. Introduction

For the purpose of this guidance, a parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

This policy is easily accessible to leaders, staff, pupils, and parents, including being published on the school's website. Parents will be sent it with any initial information when pupils join the school and reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated.

As the barriers to attendance evolve quickly, the policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary. In doing so, the School/Academy will seek the views of pupils and parents.

This policy is informed by guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE): 'Working together to improve school attendance' and 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance': <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

## 2. Policy and practice

The attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leaves of absence and informing the School/Academy of the reason for an unexpected absence.

The school will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age (age 5+) to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend.

This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

### **The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.**

**Miss Ward** (Deputy Headteacher) leads attendance and is the main contact should there be any queries around attendance.

### **Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis and for more detailed support on attendance.**

*In our school we have an attendance team. If you require attendance information please contact **Mrs Kilcoyne, our Administrator or Mrs Kelley, our Parental Involvement Worker**, who deal with attendance on a daily basis. The school can be emailed, a message left or a call to answer any queries that you may have about attendance. All other queries initially should come via the class teacher or the school office.*

### **The School/Academy's day-to-day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence.**

The School/Academy will take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.

We have developed processes that meet the needs of the pupils. We:

- Expect parents to contact the School/Academy when their child is absent to explain the reason and put in place processes to contact parents on the first day of absence where a reason has not been provided. If absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure safeguarding.

- Expect parents to understand their responsibility to keep the School/Academy up to date with at least two emergency contact details as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents to understand why and when the pupil will return.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, based on the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the School/Academy (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals *including young carers and children with medical or special educational needs /disabilities*.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- *May conduct home visits where reasons for absence are not given or a concern is raised.*

## Recording attendance:

**Attendance register:** We keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register every morning and afternoon. This is done first thing each morning and again straight after the lunchtime break.

*We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day at **9 am**. The afternoon session is taken for each group of children as they come into the classroom after their lunch break. For Reception Class this is at 12:50, KS1 at 13:05pm and for KS2 at 13:15pm.*

*The register marks whether every pupil is:*

- *Present*
- *Attending an approved off-site educational activity*
- *Absent*
- *Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances*
- *Any amendment to the attendance register will include the original entry*
- *The amended entry*
- *The reason for the amendment*
- *The date on which the amendment was made*
- *The name and position of the person who made the amendment*

*Pupils must arrive in school between 8:40-8:55am each day of the week. The doors and gate are closed at **8:55am promptly**. After this time the registers are taken at 9am. Children arriving after 8:55am and before 9:30am are marked as **late on the register**. Any child that is late must sign in through the main entrance where they will be asked to provide a reason for the late arrival. Any child arriving after **9:30am**, after the registers have closed, will be marked with an **unauthorised absence**, unless medical evidence is provided for an appointment.*

At 9:00am after the registers are taken the process for first day calling takes place. If your child is late to school you could be called to find out why your child is not in school. These are safeguarding procedures. The registers are closed **promptly at 9:30am**.

## ***How the School/Academy is promoting and incentivising good attendance.***

*This is done via:*

- *Weekly 100% attendance reward where children are chosen to attend Cookie Monster Club.*
- *Weekly Class Attendance 'Scores on Doors'*
- *Weekly whole school attendance league where points for the top four classes accumulate for an end of year class reward – special event.*
- *Half termly attendance prizes*
- *Termly most improved attendance prizes across school*
- *Termly most improved punctuality across school*
- *Personal phone calls thanking them for their engagement with improving attendance.*
- *Facebook attendance promotions and informaitons*
- *Termly newsletter*
- *Termly Outstanding attendance certificates*
- *End of year 100%/Outstanding attendance prizes*
- *Class rewards chosen by school council*

## ***The School/Academy's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.***

The School/Academy will treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, the School/Academy will discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like.

### ***Use of data:***

*The school uses a range of data for attendance. This looks at patterns both across the school, for a class or for an individual child. Attendance data helps the school to target support for poor attendance/lateness, prevent attendance becoming persistent and enables early intervention. Attendance data also highlights historic and emerging patterns across the school and for individual children. This enables the school to put strategies in place to address any issues. Actions are agreed and taken with individual families based on this data and the attendance team are directed to put intervention and support in place with the intention of improving the attendance of any child.*

*Data monitoring and evaluation is done through:*

- *Weekly attendance data. Scrutinised in an attendance meeting. Both school wide, for a class and an individual child. This highlights concerns and where the school may direct support and resourcing. This includes punctuality.*
- *Half termly data. This looks at trends, patterns, persistent absence for the school, class and individual. The individual child data is looked at where the school have concerns about their attendance.*
- *Termly data. This looks at trends, patterns, persistent absence for the school, class and individual. It also shows how well the school is doing against the national outcomes as a form of comparison.*
- *Whole school year data.*
- *Benchmark attendance data against local and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.*
- *The impact of attendance strategies overtime and their outcomes. This supports the school in identifying stronger, effective strategies to adopt and utilise well.*

Data reports with analysis and impact is shared with the Local Area Board (LAB) at least termly. This is so that the LAB can ensure the school is having a positive impact on attendance, is strategic and the school is held to account for the actions they have taken.

**The School/Academy's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority (Bradford Council).**

**Persistent Absenteeism (PA):** A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. We monitor and evaluate all absence thoroughly. Any child's attendance that is seen to be dropping will have specific actions allocated to try to prevent absence reaching the PA mark. Parents and carers will be made aware of the school's concerns straight away.

All PA (persistent absence) pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system. The school will involve parents in support and actions to improve attendance.

Absence procedures:

Things that parents will be expected to do:

- Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence if they are ill and did not realise that they were going to be absent.
- The school will ask the parent/carer for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.
- It is always best to communicate with school whatever the reason for absence.

The School will follow the Bradford Council's Staged Approach to Attendance. For absences on the first day the following will take place. Please see link at the back of this policy for details.

**Pupils whose attendance is between 90-100%:**

- If school is not satisfied that the absence is as a result of an exceptional circumstance such as the authenticity of an illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.
- A phone call will be made to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. A home visit may be carried out if contact is not made.
- The Attendance Leader will delegate to their team calls to anyone with an unauthorised absence or anyone who is a persistent absentee and discuss current attendance levels, the importance of being in school and request medical evidence or similar.
- Home visits are conducted by the Attendance Team if necessary.
- The Headteacher and Attendance Lead monitor unauthorised absences and letters are sent home to parents where this is appropriate. This is set out in the Staged Approach to Attendance.

**Pupils whose attendance is below 90%:**

- If absence fails to improve, the case may be taken to court.
- In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to

*multiagency work with other professionals.*

- *If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the Attendance Leader will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.*
- *Letters are sent home to record attendance concerns.*

***Pupils whose attendance is below 80%:***

- *Stage 3 of The Staged Approach to Attendance is followed.*
- *This includes targeted support including support from a range of professionals.*
- *The primary responsibility falls to the Local Authority- Bradford Council- when a request is made from the school for this stage to be addressed.*
- *A criminal investigation process may take place led by Bradford Council.*

***The point at which Fixed Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.***

In the first instance, the School/Academy will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.

*We may:*

- *Support children pastorally*
- *Put in place a key adult to meet and greet key children in a morning*
- *Agree a range of strategies to support children who find it challenging to come into the school building*
- *Make referrals to other agencies e.g. Education Emotional Well-being Practitioners Team, MAGIC, CAMHS and the school counsellor.*
- *Provide focused support for children who may find the classroom challenging.*
- *Provide incentives and rewards*
- *Put Parent Contracts in place.*

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. The School/Academy will consider each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

*Penalty Notices can be issued without warning where schools can show that a leave of absence was taken during term time without the consent of the Head Teacher and the parent was made aware in writing of the decision to unauthorise the period of absence, the reasons why (including details of any evidence), and the possible consequences, including the issuing of a fixed penalty notice. Penalty Notices can also be issued retrospectively should the school become aware that a child is absent due to an unauthorised leave of absence after the child's first day of absence.'*

Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the School/Academy will hold more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance and may include the School/Academy's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.



Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with all schools should work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, Bradford Council 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.
- The Council will consider which legal option is the most appropriate, which will usually be a prosecution via the magistrates court, or a fixed penalty notice.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners will work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support.

These actions will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require the School/Academy to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners:

- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

In all cases, the School/Academy will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, all parties will work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

### **Religious Observance**

Religious observance which falls outside of the school holiday period enables families to take a maximum of three days for religious observance in one academic year (September to the following July).

Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form well in advance of the absence. Where this may not be possible parents will be expected to make the school as soon as possible before via telephone, email or MyEd.

## A quick guide to attendance for parents

<p><i>The law entitles every child of compulsory school age (age 5+) to an efficient, full-time education</i></p>	<p><i>Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly</i></p>
<p><i>This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment (learning), wellbeing, and wider life chances</i></p>	<p><i>The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have high rates of attendance</i></p>
<p><b><i>The school day starts at 8.55am</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>The register closes at 9.30am</i></b></p>
<p><b><i>School finishes at 3.15pm for Year 5 and 6 and 3pm for the rest of the school.</i></b></p>	
<p><b><i>Good attendance is <b>celebrated</b> and <b>rewarded</b>, including:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Weekly 100% attendance reward where children are chosen to attend Cookie Monster Club.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Weekly whole school attendance league where points for the top four classes accumulate for an end of year class reward – special event.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Half termly attendance prizes</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Termly most improved attendance prizes across school.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Termly most improved punctuality across school.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Personal phone calls thanking parents for their engagement with improving attendance.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Facebook attendance promotions and information.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Termly Outstanding attendance certificates.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>End of year 100%/Outstanding attendance prizes.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Class rewards chosen by school council.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Non-authorized absence <b>impacts negatively on your child</b> and may result in a <b>Fixed Penalty Notice</b> (per parent per child) or <b>other interventions</b></b></p>
<p><i>If your child cannot attend school, please telephone 01274 567545 or send a message via My Ed by 8.55am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day</i></p>	<p><i>The Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Miss D Ward</i></p>

<p><i>To report an absence, please contact the school office by telephone: 01274 567545. Alternatively, you can send a message via MyEd.</i></p>	<p><i>To discuss your child's attendance, please contact either Mrs Kilcoyne or Mrs Kelley by telephone: 01274 567545</i></p>
<p><b>Persistent absence:</b> Below 90% attendance – equal to one full day missed every two weeks</p>	<p><b>Severe absence:</b> Below 50% attendance – equal to 2.5 full days missed every week</p>
<p>Your child's <b>expected attendance</b> is at least <b>95%</b> at primary school and at least <b>94%</b> at secondary school. <i>In our school we strive to achieve above this at 97% as a school. This is because we aspire high for all our pupils.</i></p>	
<p><b>Term time holiday will not be authorised</b></p>	

### 3. School ethos and culture

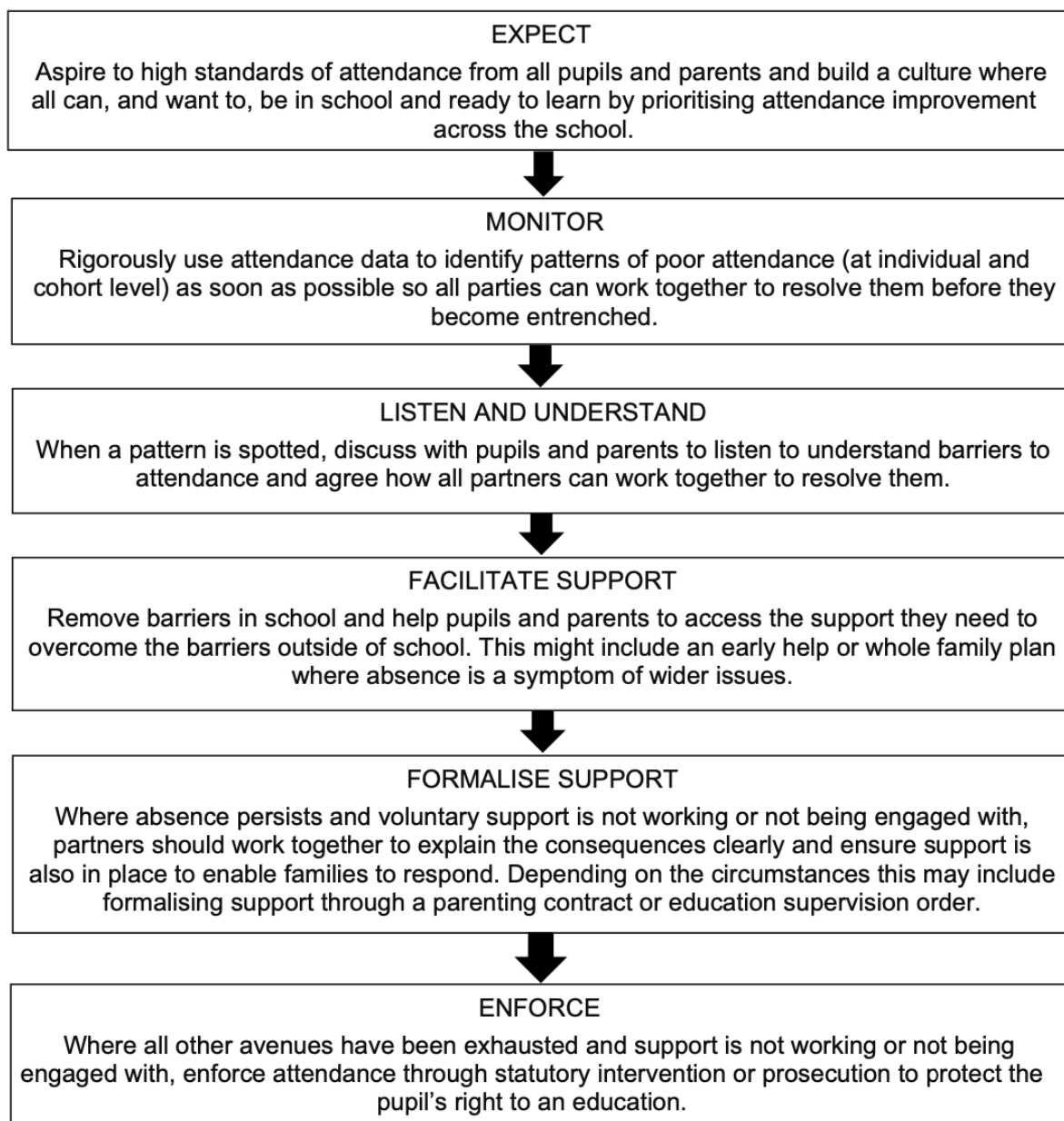
Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and as an effective school we recognise the importance of pupils/students developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. We recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the School/Academy's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance, we:

- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the School/Academy's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities should include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools should help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It should also include clarity on the short- and long-term consequences of poor attendance.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

In addition, we:

- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

We will work with partners to:



Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils will be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, the School/Academy will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision.

## 4. Safeguarding

The School/Academy recognises that children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The Attendance Policy has a direct link to the Child Protection policy; the Behaviour policy; Anti-Bullying strategies and the Health and Safety Policy.

The School/Academy has also adopted the Local Authority Policies on Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education. The School/Academy also follows Local Authority guidance in relation to coding absence for families who travel as part of their culture. All these policies have been endorsed by the School's Local Advisory Board/Trust Board, which support the School/Academy in all attempts to improve the attendance and safeguarding agenda.

Development and implementation of this policy will be considered under School/Academy obligations from the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## 5. Data

We use attendance data to:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.
- Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to parents.
- Identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmark our attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the Local Advisory Board and Trustees.

## 6. Other points to note

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, the attendance policy accounts for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. The policy will be applied fairly and consistently but considers the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of the policy, the School/Academy considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The roles of the Trust Board and the Local Authority are outlined in guidance from the Department for Education - *Working together to improve school attendance* - available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>



## 7. Further information

**Guidance for parents on school attendance (Department for Education)**

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance.pdf>

**Resources for families (Children's Commissioner)**

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/>

**Attendance (Bradford Council)**

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/education-and-skills/school-support-services/attendance/>

**Working together to improve school attendance (Department for Education)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

**Pupil attendance in school data (Department for Education)**

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools>

**Improving attendance: good practice for schools and trusts (Department for Education)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/improving-attendance-good-practice-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts>

