Borrow Wood Primary School Attendance Policy

WRITTEN BY:	Natalie Bartlett/Tracey Fletcher
APPROVED BY:	Trust Policy
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Contents

Expectations	2
The Law on Education and right to full time education	2
Our School's Processes for attendance	3
Different levels of attendance	4
How to request leave of absence	5
ISAO service	5
Part-time timetables	6
Penalty notices	6
Roles of different people/groups	7
Appendix 1- The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) Safeguarding Update 26th April 2024 **Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are changing from 19th August 2024**	11
Appendix 2-Derby City Council Penalty Notice update August 2024 – Parent information	12

The Department for Education have updated Working together to improve school attendance, and this policy reflects the important changes and expectations around high attendance at school. Odyssey Collaborative Trust schools will adhere to this guidance.

EXPECTATIONS

At our school we will work with families and other relevant agencies to ensure that all pupils have high rates of school attendance. This means we will:

- Expect – Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
- Monitor – Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
- Listen and understand – When a pattern is spotted, discuss this with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- Facilitate support – Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school.
- Formalise support – Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. This may include formalising support in some circumstances.
- Enforce – Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

THE LAW ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND RIGHT TO A FULL TIME EDUCATION

Working together to improve school attendance states that:

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to in 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 either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

- 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 or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

- 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. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher

standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% 9 among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

- For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extrafamilial harms, including crime (the proportion of children that had been cautioned or sentenced for any offence that had ever been persistently absent was 81% and for serious violence offence was 85%).

OUR SCHOOL'S PROCESSES FOR ATTENDANCE:

BORROW WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL we have the following processes:

Borrow Wood Primary School's procedures for managing attendance
DAILY ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT The register is taken twice daily so each day consists of two sessions for attendance purposes. • Gates are opened at 8.45am and children go straight into classrooms from this time. • All children must in school by 8.55am for the register to be taken ready for 9.00am when teaching starts. • External gates are locked at 9.00am. • The afternoon session starts at 1.00pm. • Each pupil is marked as being present or absent. • Present codes are /\. A range of absent codes are used depending on the reason for the absence.
LATENESS • Any pupils arriving after 9.00am should report to the school office where they will be registered as late (L). • Children arriving after 9.30am will be registered as unauthorised absence (U).
ABSENCE There are two types of absences. • **Authorised** - being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. This may change to unauthorised if high or repeated absence is identified. (For further clarification, see Appendix 1 – Derby City Penalty Notice Update August 2024 – Parent Information) • **Unauthorised** - Unauthorised absence is where a pupil's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 6(2) or where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established. **How to inform the school of an absence** • Absences should be reported to the school office by 9.00am on the first day of absence and each day thereafter. • Absences can be reported by phone, email, via Arbor message or in person.

If absence is not reported by 9.15am, school will attempt to call the first contact to find out the reason for the child's absence. If the first contact does not respond, school will go down the contacts' list until a reason is provided. School will also make contact by text and email if no contact responds by phone. School may undertake a home visit.

Extended absence
If a child is absent from school for longer than 4 days, whether reasons have been provided or not, school will undertake a home visit to ensure that there have been 'eyes on' the child/ren. This is to ensure that children are safe and well.

Concerns for the welfare of a child – Children Missing in Education (CME)
If a child is absent from school for three days without school being able to make contact with the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence, a home visit will take place as your child could be deemed as missing in education.

Absence monitoring
Through our monitoring processes, we are rigorous in checking for regular attendance and identifying children who are persistently and severely absent from school. Identified patterns of non-attendance are a focus for targeted attendance support.

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE

% of sessions attended	What attendance at each level means
Above 97%	Attendance is good.
95.1% - 97%	While attendance at this level is not considered to be particularly high, it is unlikely that there will be any concerns for pupils at this level.
93.1% - 95%	Attendance is lower than it should be in most cases. The school may intervene at this point to inform parents/carers that attendance is below 95% and school will be carefully tracking pupils at this level of attendance. In some cases, the school may no longer approve absence for illness unless evidence* is submitted. Parents will be informed, if this is the case.
90.1% - 93%	In all but a few cases, attendance at this rate is too low. School will make contact to raise concerns and offer support. School will actively consider no longer approving absence unless evidence* is submitted. Parents will be informed, if this is the case.
75.1% - 90%	This is classed as persistently absent. The school will consider accessing support from the IASO service, depending on circumstances. If the IASO is contacted, parents will be informed.
50.1% - 75%	When attendance is at this rate the school will inform parents that their child is at danger of being severely absent. A meeting will be held. The school will access support from the IASO service.
Below 50%	This is classed as severely absent. The school will prioritise support, including from the IASO service or other agencies, for pupils with attendance at this level. At this level, a referral to social care will be made. Parents/carers will be invited to a meeting.

* Evidence may include correspondence from a medical professional, prescribed medication or evidence of appointments etc.

The school may take action from the table above, even if the level of attendance hasn't been reached, if the school is concerned about the child's attendance.

HOW TO REQUEST A LEAVE OF ABSENCE • Only a head teacher can authorise a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Applications are considered individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request, including any previous absence. • If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the head teacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. All absences not related to illness, require a Leave of Absence form to be completed and submitted to the school office. Leave of absence forms can be downloaded from the school website or requested, in person, from the school office.	
The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.	Natalie Bartlett Head teacher n.bartlett@borrowwood.odysseyct.org.uk 01332 662826
The name and contact details of the member of school staff who parents/carers should contact about support for attendance on day-to-day basis (this may be the same person as the strategic lead).	Natalie Bartlett Head teacher n.bartlett@borrowwood.odysseyct.org.uk 01332 662826
How the school promotes and incentivises good attendance.	The Odyssey Collaborative Trust aim 'Our Children Thrive, Our Colleagues Thrive, Our Community Thrives' links to good attendance. All children are expected to attend school and have high expectations of attendance and punctuality. School attendance is promoted through proactive engagement and early intervention with families. T

IASO SERVICE

Odyssey Collaborative Trust access support from Derby City's Inclusion and Attendance Support Service who provide an Inclusion and Attendance Support Officer (IASO). This services means:

- The school meets every half-term with the IASO to identify children at risk of being persistently absent. Required actions are discussed and agreed.
- The IASO will usually get involved with pupils whose attendance is causing concern.
- The CEO of the trust will meet with the IASO manager to review the quality of the service received by the school on a termly basis.
- Fines may be issued to parents/carers. (For further clarification, see Appendix 1 – Derby City Penalty Notice Update August 2024 – Parent Information)

PART-TIME TIMETABLES

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.

A part-time timetable must 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 should have a time limit by

which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents/carers. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

PENALTY NOTICES

Penalty notices are served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by schools where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.

Odyssey Trust schools adhere to Derby City's Local Authority's Penalty Notice Update August 2024

Data will be processed to be in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

SUMMARY TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

	Parents are expected to:	School is expected to:	Those responsible for governance[1] are expected to:	Local Authority/IASO are expected to:
All pupils	Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school by 9.00am by phone, email or in person when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance using the form in the appendix. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and retain these for three years from the point of data entry. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. At Borrow Wood Primary School, this is the head teacher. The school can record an absence as unauthorised if there it is reasonable for the school to doubt the reason given.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance. School attendance will be reported to Local Governing Boards on a termly basis, with the Board of Trustees' Education Committee receiving a termly report on all schools in the Trust to identify common issues and barriers and ensure effective practice is shared between schools.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. The IASO team will work with the school to remove barriers to attendance. A named point of contact will be provided.

[1] The Board of Trustees is responsible for governance, however some duties are delegated to Local Governing Boards. See the Trust's Scheme of Delegation for more information.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent	Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support. At Borrow Wood Primary School parents can contact Tracey Fletcher for advice and support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. Notify all parents/carers whose child's attendance is below 95%. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners.	When receiving termly attendance data, Local Governing Boards review the numbers of pupils whose attendance is between 93% and 90% and ensure school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. Trustees' Education Committee to receive report on numbers of pupils across the trust whose attendance is between 93% and 90%.	Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners.
Persistently absent pupils (below 90%, but above 50%)	Work with the school and IASO to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent through IASO and where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended of pupils and the schools of any siblings.	When receiving termly attendance data, Local Governing Boards review the numbers of pupils whose attendance is below 90% and ensure school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. Trustees' Education Committee to receive report on numbers of pupils across the trust whose attendance is below 90%.	As part of the service level agreement, focused case work for pupils below 90% where required. Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Severely absent pupils (less than 50% attendance)	Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and ensure school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.
Support for cohorts of pupils	NA	Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance	Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.
Support for pupils with a social worker	Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	Both at Local Governing Board level and Trustee (Education Committee) level, attendance data on pupils who have an allocated social worker.	Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area. Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children. Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.
Monitor	Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance. Report to all parents/carers annually on their child's attendance rate unless attendance becomes a concern and then parents/carers will be informed on a more regular basis.	Ofsted considers schools' efforts to improve or sustain high attendance as part of inspections. Multi-academy trusts regularly review attendance data and support schools.	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.

Appendix 1

The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) Safeguarding Update 26th April 2024

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are changing from 19th August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes will come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

National Threshold
There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. **Please note:** The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

First Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid with 28 days. Reduced to £80 per child, per child if paid within 21 days.

Per Parent, Per Child
Penalty notices are issued per parent for each child that was absent. For example: 2 siblings absent from school for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 2 separate fines

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The Second time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £160 per parent per child paid within 28 days. No discount will be offered.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal records and fines of up to £2,500

Parent "who is a parent?"
Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as: ➢ All natural (biological) parents whether thay are married or not. ➢ Any person who, although not a natural parent has responsibility for a child or young person. ➢ Any person who, although not a natural parent has care for a child or young person.

Appendix 2

Derby City Council Penalty Notice update – August 2024 – Parent information

Every moment in school counts and days missed add up quickly. Evidence shows that pupils who have good attendance enjoy better wellbeing and school performance than those who don't.

There are only a few circumstances where a child is allowed to miss school, such as illness or where the school has given permission because of an exceptional circumstance.

However, if your child misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene and you may be issued a fine.

The Department for Education are introducing a new national framework which will mean all local authorities have the same rules in place for when they need to consider a fine. More details regarding these are below.

It's important to acknowledge that children with long-term medical or more serious mental health conditions, and those with special educational needs and disabilities may face additional barriers.

For children who face complex barriers to attendance, schools should continue to have sensitive conversations with children and families and work with them to put support in place for their individual needs.

How much could I be fined if my child misses school?

In the majority of cases, schools and the local authority will try to provide support to help you improve your child's attendance first, but if this isn't effective or the absence is for unauthorised term time holiday, parents may face paying a fine.

Currently, it's the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents, meaning the process varies from council to council.

However, under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**.

This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

How can you be sure parent fines are fair?

Fines are a last resort, and parents will be offered support to help improve their child's attendance first. The vast majority of fines for unauthorised absence (89%) are issued for term time holidays.

What if my child needs to miss school?

Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet.
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school.

What happens if my child misses school without a good reason?

If your child is absent and you haven't received advance permission from the headteacher to take your child out of school, the school and local council may take action.

Before that, your child's school and your local council are expected to support you to improve the child's attendance before any measures are put in place**.**

These measures can include:

- **Issue a penalty notice, otherwise known as a 'fine'** – your local council can give each parent a fine. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.
- **Seek an Education Supervision Order from the family court** – if the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of, or as well as, prosecuting you.
- **Prosecute you** – this means you have to go to court. You could get a fine, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order.