Menston Primary School

Attendance Policy

Menston Primary School

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1. Aims

At Menston Primary School, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

The school aims to work together with parents to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually. The school sets high targets for attendance and aims for all children to achieve at least 97% attendance in each school year. This means that, ideally, no child will have more than 5 days' absence in any school year. School staff will work to encourage high attendance by providing a stimulating, welcoming, inclusive environment in which children thrive and in which they love to come to school.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full time basis.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
> [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)](#)
> [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
> Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school
> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school
> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
> Having an oversight of data analysis
> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Marie Wilson (Headteacher) and can be contacted via the school office.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Belinda Smitheringale and can be contacted via the school office.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:15 am and 1:00 pm

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time – 08:55. Gates are open from 08:45 to allow a ten-minute window for drop-off)
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30 am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence as appropriate/ agreed with the attendance officer), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Book family holidays within the 13 weeks of school holidays, not in term time.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> (For pupils of compulsory school age) Whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:55 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open at the office until 09:15 in classrooms. The office will close registers at 09:25. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12:50.

4.2 Unexpected absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unexpected absence by 08:30 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

The school has a 24-hour absence-reporting line on 01943 873180. If calling during school office hours, parents/carers should ask to speak to Mrs Smitheringale, our attendance officer. If no-one is available to take a call, parents/carers should state the child's name, class, reason for absence and any other relevant information. Mrs Smitheringale may call back for more information as appropriate.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

> After the register has closed (09:25) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (usually U – unauthorised unless there is a valid reason such as illness)

Doors and gates will close at 08:55. Any child arriving later than this will need to be taken to the school office where parents/ cares will be asked to sign them in with the reason for lateness. The attendance officer will be alert to patterns of regular lateness and will address this with families in a timely manner with the intention of removing any barriers to children arriving at school on time every day.

Pupils arriving after 9.25am will usually be marked as late (code U – after registers close). This national code counts as an unauthorised absence which means they will lose their attendance mark for that morning which in turn impacts upon their overall attendance percentage.

Frequent lateness:
> is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class
> is disruptive to the efficient day to day running of the school
> will result in concerns around unauthorised absence and may provide grounds for the issue of a Penalty Notice or ultimately to prosecution

The school's attendance officer will work with parents in the interest of addressing frequent lateness prior to issuing any Penalty Notices.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may do a doorstep visit, contact local secondary schools that any siblings attend or contact the police

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Attendance is shared via the Arbor app. And online portal. Parents can log into the app/ portal and have an immediate overview of their child's attendance. Attendance and absence levels will also be reported within termly reports.

Regular attendance and absence monitoring by the attendance officer will lead to families being contacted if their child's attendance falls below 95%. The attendance officer will then work with these families as appropriate in the interests of improving attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Requests for term-time absence

Any request for leave of absence during term time should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the planned absence. Leave of absence request forms are available at the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. All holidays in term time will be unauthorised.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time which don't fall into the authorised categories above if they consider there to be **'exceptional circumstances'**. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

'Exceptional circumstances' can be defined as:

> the school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause

> the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance

> a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school

> 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

> where a Local Authority license has been obtained for a pupil to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963

> to attend the funeral or wedding of a close family member (the day that the event takes place is likely to be authorised)

This list is not exhaustive and the school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A child's current and prior attendance will also be taken into consideration when term-time absence requests are submitted. All holidays in term time will be unauthorised.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. A fine can be issued in cases where a pupil has 6 or more sessions (3 days) of consecutive unauthorised absence in line with penalty notice information published on Bradford Council Penalty Notices information., which can be found **here**.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices will be issued by Bradford Council Education Safeguarding Team's Prosecution Team following referral by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice will take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

From 1st April 2023, Bradford Council updated their policies in relation to unauthorized term-time absence for holidays:

*A decision has been made by Bradford Council to change their approach to situations where families take **two or more periods of unauthorised leave in a 12-month period (totalling 10 school days or more), or when a period of four or more weeks of leave is taken**. In these instances, Bradford Council will utilise the option to start legal proceedings via the magistrates' court, instead of issuing a penalty notice. This means that parents may be liable to receive a significantly higher fine (up to **£2,500 per child, per parent**) if found guilty, as well as receive a criminal record, which may be reportable to employers (for example, via a DBS Check). In rare circumstances, magistrates can consider a custodial sentence for up to 3 months.*

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Class teachers regularly reinforce attendance and punctuation expectations. They work with the attendance officer and families to implement appropriate strategies to improve attendance that has fallen below 95%.

Attendance and punctuality expectations are reinforced in assemblies, on the school website and through newsletters. High attendance is celebrated in assemblies and through messages home.

Individual families are supported to improve attendance where it falls below 95%.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and punctuation weekly to identify any concerns and address these in a timely manner

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether there are particular children or groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and take appropriate steps to remove attendance barriers

> Implement strategies to address poor attendance/ regular lateness and record the impact of these strategies.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school and to plan for improving attendance

> Provide access to wider support services to remove any barriers to attendance

> Follow the guidance and processes as set out by Bradford Council Attendance and Education Safeguarding teams, calling on support from these teams as appropriate

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policies

Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Bradford Council school attendance staged intervention model – stage 1

Stage One – School Attendance Staged Intervention Model

A Pupil's Attendance falls below School Attendance Target (i.e. attendance drops below 95%)

First Day Absence Contact
Telephone contact made with parent/carer on the first day of a child's absence from school. (Safeguarding Duty)

Are there unresolved "N" Codes due to absence?

Ongoing Procedure

Lates
Letter "L" sent after 5 sessions of lateness

Improved
No Further Action monitor

No Improvement
School Meeting with Parent

Yes
- School Letter N sent to parent/carer(s)
- "N" codes changed to "O" if no explanation given two weeks after the absence occured

No

Reason given and improved attendance:
No Further Action: Monitor

No reasons given OR the reasons given are unsatisfactory OR attendance fails to improve

School Letter 1
- Sent to parents of pupils whose attendance drops below school's attendance target (i.e below 95%)
- Sent by Senior Member of Staff i.e. Head Teacher or Year Head.

Improved
No Further Action
Monitor

No Improvement
Arrange to meeting with parent and send School Letter 3

School Letter 2
Sent after 2 weeks if no improvement and no satisfactory explanation have been received to explain the absence

No

Is Absence due to Illness/Medical Reasons?

YES
School Letter MED sent if patterns of illness and medical absence exist and no explanation why

No Improvement, concerns still exist and no medical evidence received

Improved or reason known
No Further Action and monitor

Appendix 3: Bradford Council school attendance staged intervention model – stage 2

Child's attendance falls below 90% over the last 12 weeks

Attendance is below 60% and/or the child has a Child in Need/ Child Protection Plan?

Yes → Warning Letter 1 issued, and home visit announced jointly with Lead Professional

No → Warning Letter 1 issued

Home Visit Takes Plan - Action Plan Completed

3 Week Review Period

Pupil Attendance Improves?

No → Attendance Panel Meeting (APM) Parenting Contract Completed

Did Parent Attend?

No → Announced / Unannounced Home Visit - Parenting Contract Completed

Yes → 3 Week Review Period

Pupil Attendance Improves?

Yes → No Further Action Attendance Monitored

No → Can a Penalty Notice be Requested?

Yes → Penalty Notice Request

No → Final Warning Letter Issued Complete Statutory Intervention Request

Compile Statutory Intervention Evidence

Stage Two Intervention Tracking Form OR System generated Chronology

Statutory Intervention Request Form

Submit Request for Statutory Intervention