Bedford Inclusive Learning and Training Trust

Achieving • Believing • Collaborating

Attendance Policy

Policy Status: Other

Review Cycle: 2 Years

Owner: Catherine Assink **Date:** September 2026

Approved by: MAT SLT **Date:** September 2026

Review Date: September 2028

Aims

At BILTT, we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take full advantage of all the learning opportunities that we have to offer and achieve to their full potential.
We are committed to:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence whenever possible
- 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 and any issues are addressed swiftly.

BILTT encourages good attendance through making pupils feel valued, welcome, safe and secure whilst in school. We also acknowledge that some pupils have medical needs which prevent them from achieving 100% attendance and aim to ensure that these families feel supported in achieving the highest percentage possible in this context.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is written in conjunction with the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' published 29th February 2024 (updated 19th August 24). It reflects the following legislation:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations

Relevant government guidance

- Children missing education
- Keeping children safe in education and Working together to safeguard children
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Elective home education
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Preventing and tackling bullying
- Providing remote education

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Body

The Governing Body must:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.

- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Nominate a named attendance governor to maintain strategic oversight of attendance, persistent absence, severe absence and vulnerable pupil groups.
- Receive attendance reports at least termly, including analysis of groups, persistent and severe absence, SEND and disadvantaged pupils, actions taken and evidence of impact.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Rigorous tracking of school-level absence data and reporting it to the LGB
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Ensuring robust training for staff around supporting attendance
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

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
- 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 …… and can be contacted via email addresses as follows. ……

Equality, SEND and medical needs considerations

BILTT recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure that attendance expectations and processes do not disadvantage pupils with protected characteristics, including pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions, anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) or mental health needs. Schools will take an individualised, supportive and proportionate approach, working with families and relevant professionals to understand barriers to attendance and agree appropriate support.

- Consider reasonable adjustments to routines, communication, arrival arrangements, transitions, part-time timetables where appropriate, or other support needed to remove barriers to attendance;
- Work with the sendco, pastoral staff, dsl, health professionals, the local authority and other agencies where attendance concerns are linked to send, medical needs, anxiety, ebsa or mental health;
- Record agreed support, review its impact and ensure any formal action is proportionate and only considered after appropriate support and adjustments have been explored, unless there are safeguarding concerns requiring immediate escalation.

The Attendance Champion

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 …… and can be contacted via email addresses as follows. ……

Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by …… each morning.

School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

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

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, 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
- Liaise with school if any issues arise.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register which is monitored twice daily, and strategically on a monthly basis to analyse patterns.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

Unplanned absence

Parents/Carers must notify school by 9am on the first day of their child's absence, explaining the reason and, if possible, indicating when the child may return. Such messages may be received by phone, note or email to the school office. Parents/ Carers are expected to maintain contact and keep the school updated during any period of absence.

If no message is received, the office will make a phone call to the parent/carer by 9:30 to find out the reason for the absence and date of expected return. This will be recorded on the pupil file.

If attendance is an issue, on occasion we may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. This is to help us plan a package of support.

Planned absence

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

For other types of term-time absence families must apply as far in advance as possible.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' which may include;

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad.
- Exceptional circumstances which would be at the discretion of the Headteacher

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific circumstances. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – this is for one day for a term time event.
- Mobile pupils travelling for trade or business reason.
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday
- Study leave
- In very exceptional circumstance, an agreed part time timetable to meet individual needs as per page 25 of the guidance.

Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to be in school by …… at the latest when the register is taken each morning.

- registers will remain open until …… each morning and …… each afternoon. If a pupil arrives to school after …… but before …… they will be marked as **late**. If

the issue is linked to transport (Borough Minibus issues) they will not be coded as late as this is beyond the control of families.

- pupils who arrive after the registers have been closed at ..... and ..... will be marked with the U code ("Late and arrived after the register closed"), which counts as an unauthorised absence (unless the family have informed the school of an extenuating circumstance).

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via written reports and parent consultations.

Children Who are Absent from Education

As per Keeping Children Safe in Education and statutory Children Missing Education guidance, BILTT schools will follow local authority CME procedures where a child is absent from education, cannot be located, or there are concerns that they may not be receiving suitable education. Schools will make reasonable enquiries, record all actions taken and inform the local authority in line with its published timescales and reporting routes.

- Complete first-day absence procedures promptly, including contact with parents/carers and emergency contacts where required;
- Undertake home visits where appropriate, proportionate and in line with school safeguarding procedures;
- Refer to the local authority cme team promptly where absence remains unexplained, a pupil's whereabouts are unknown, or there is evidence that the child may not be receiving suitable education;
- Escalate safeguarding concerns immediately to the dsl and, where threshold is met, to children's social care, police or other safeguarding partners.

How do we support attendance?

BILTT are clear on the importance of working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance. Initially school seek personalised supportive methods to engage families and pupils in increasing their attendance. We believe that often poor attendance is symptomatic of underlying issues which we seek to resolve. We work closely with a range of multi-agency colleagues as appropriate in each situation. All partners should:

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 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. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

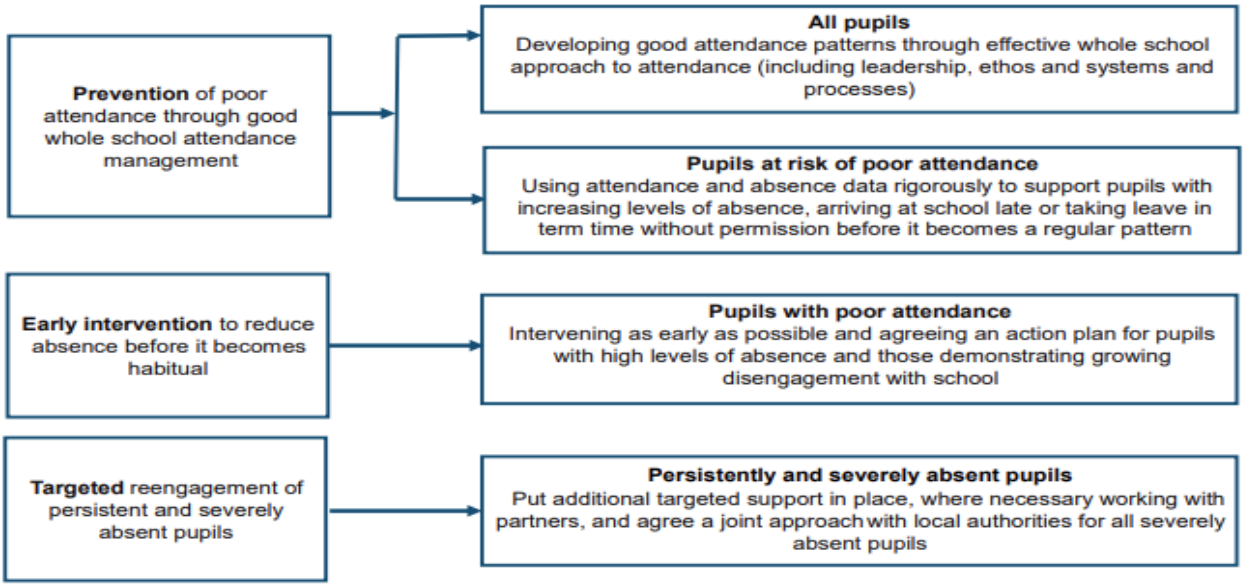
Formalise support

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 also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Effective school attendance improvement and management



Attendance monitoring

The school will:

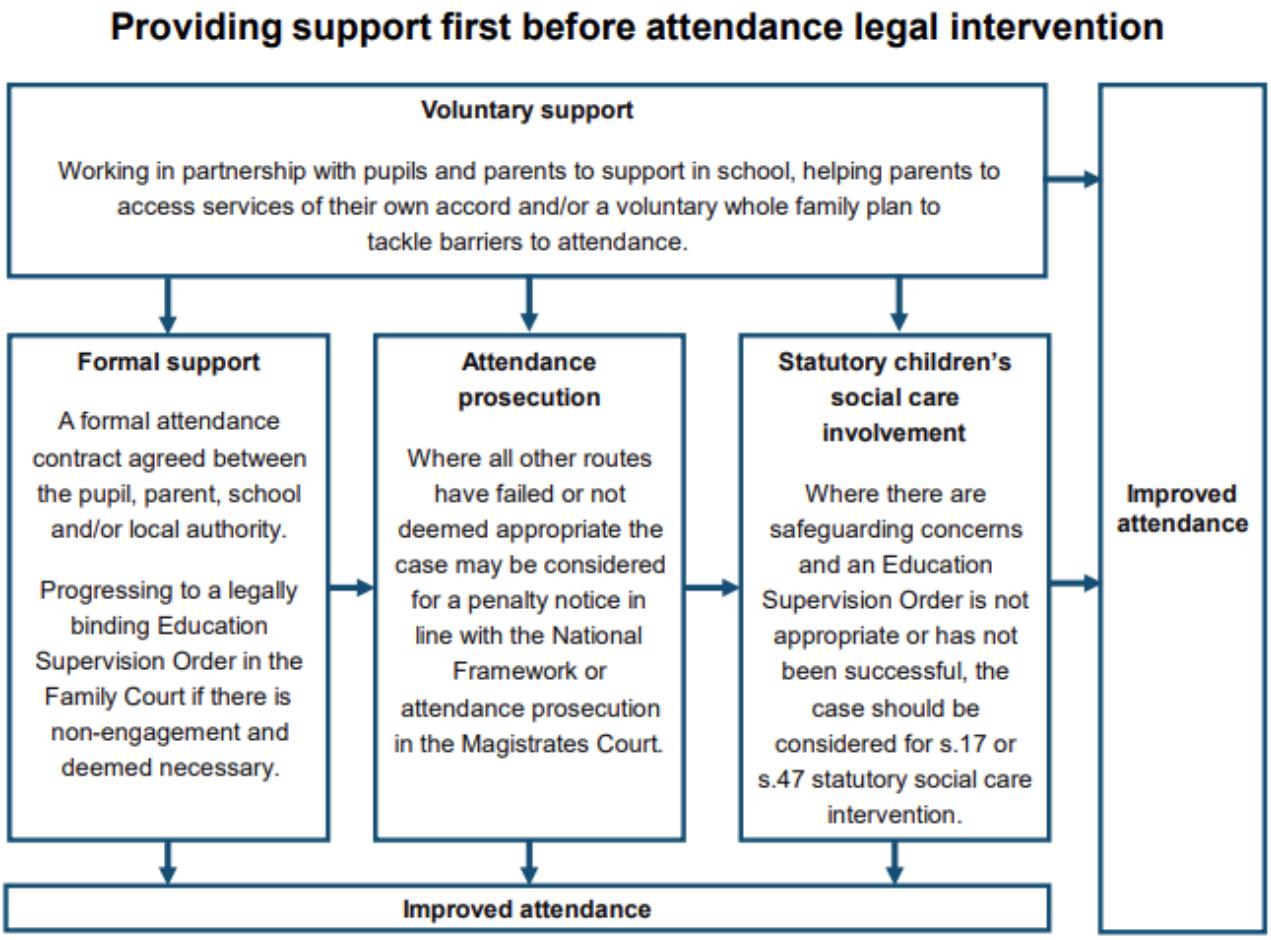
- Monitor attendance and absence data daily and weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level,
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern,
- Hold mentoring meetings with pupils to motivate them and address any issues.
- Share any key cases attendance concern cases with the DSL
- All analysis will result in action planning including graduated letters of concern to parents and one to one action planning with pupils.
- IF attendance drops below 92% graduated letters alerting parents are sent. Further letters are sent if attendance drops to 90%. These are always followed up with phone calls and meetings as needed.
- Leaders at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns,
- impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies,

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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Refer to Education Welfare Services if the above doesn't improve the attendance



Fines

If a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks they may be issued with a fine, or penalty notice,

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will
  be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.
- A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

Legal sanctions

We believe that supportive strategies are the most effective but at times we have a legal duty to follow more formal routes if attendance remains an issue. This may include:

- Putting formal support in place in the form of an **attendance contract** or an education supervision order.
- Issuing a **Notice to Improve** and/or **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.
- 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. The court may issue an **Education Supervision Order**.

If these are not complied with; Local authorities have the power to prosecute:

- Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school, for which there are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 53 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence my result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision (under sections 444 and 444ZA). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000), or if the parent is found to have known the child was not attending regularly and failed to ensure that they did so, a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- Parents who persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 to the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order (under section 375 of the Sentencing Act 2020). These may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000)

Monitoring arrangements

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

Attendance will be monitored through school-level leadership reports, termly reporting to the Local Governing Body and trust-level oversight through BILTT quality assurance arrangements. The named attendance governor will provide challenge and assurance to leaders, with trust leaders reviewing attendance trends, vulnerable pupil groups and the impact of support across schools.

Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

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
K	Off-site educational activity	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
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 an approved work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Interview	Pupil is attending an interview for employment or another educational setting
M	Medical/dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
Q	Unable to attend for an unavoidable cause	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	A mobile pupil of no fixed abode is traveling, as agreed with the school
Y1	Unable to attend for an unavoidable cause	Pupil is unable to attend due to transport normally provided being unavailable
Y2	Unable to attend for an unavoidable cause	Pupil is unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend for an unavoidable cause	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend for an unavoidable cause	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend for an unavoidable cause	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Unauthorised absence	Absent in other or unknown circumstances 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	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day