



# The Peak Federation

(Grindleford and Bamford Primary Schools)

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

File Name: TPF Attendance and Punctuality Policy September 2025

Category: Safeguarding

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Version: V02

Approved by: FGB

Review Period: 3 Years

Next Review Date: September 2028

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The staff and Governors of The Peak Federation schools are committed to providing the finest education possible.

At Bamford Primary School and Grindleford Primary School we believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Attending school is vitally important for all children to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them at school.

We believe that means enabling every pupil to learn to use their basic skills as well as to promote achievement in a wide range of other subjects. This takes place in a school where everyone believes in the importance of taking an increasing degree of responsibility for one's behaviour and learning.

The schools have a collective commitment to ensure it provides an inclusive education for all pupils. In order to benefit from this education pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually.

Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with parents and pupils, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. In order to benefit from this education pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually. It is recognised that there are many reasons for poor attendance and this attendance policy outlines the strategies adopted by the school to encourage all children to attend school on a regular basis. We will adopt a clearly focussed approach aimed at returning the pupils to full attendance at all times.

We use the services of the Education Welfare Officer from Derbyshire Local Authority to support our school in this aim.

## **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- To encourage children to maintain high attendance and punctuality at all times.
- To encourage parents to support their children in achieving 100% attendance in order to instil good habits early in school life.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils whose attendance figures fall below the school/local authority guidelines
- To ensure that parents and carers understand their legal responsibilities and the importance of regular school attendance for their child.
- To ensure that children are aware of the importance of good attendance.
- To keep parents and carer informed of their child's attendance levels and inform them of any concerns immediately.

## Definitions

### Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

*Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.*

### Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

## Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

The schools will apply the following procedures to manage attendance and punctuality.

- Registration will take place at the start of each morning and afternoon session.
- Registers will be checked at the end of each session to identify absentees. Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be telephoned on that day.
- Attendance records will be stored on the school's Information Data Base.
- Parents/carers should inform the school on the first day of absence either by letter, telephone or registered, known E-mail accounts.
- Office staff will inform the class teacher of any known absence.

- Where no explanation is available, the school will attempt to contact parent/carers on the contact numbers supplied by them. This will be done as soon after the start of the school day as is possible.
- For absences beyond three days, parents should contact the school again to detail the reason for continued absence. If this does not occur, contact may be made with home by the office staff.
- Pupils' attendance figures, including Unauthorised Absence, will be recorded on their annual report.
- The school will send details on attendance, both authorised and unauthorised to the Department for Education and Skills as required by current regulations.
- The head teacher reviews the attendance half termly and monitors any child whose attendance is less than 95%. Parents may be informed by letter if this occurs. This may result in a referral being made to the School's Education Welfare Officer if attendance is 90% or below.

## **Responsibilities**

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

- Mrs Gemmell, Head teacher, will support the pupil or family where required.

### **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere.
- Providing a safe learning environment
- Taking the register.

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere.
- Providing a safe learning environment.
- Informing parents of their child's attendance on a yearly basis.
- Encouraging good attendance and punctuality through individual and class reward systems.
- Monitoring levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Reviewing the attendance half termly and monitoring any child whose attendance is less than 95% or has a minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 10 weeks.

- Making a referral to the School's Family Support Worker if attendance is 90% or below.

## **Administration staff**

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Maintaining absence records.
- Contact parents by phone or text them when a child fails to attend and no message has been left to explain the absence, on the first day of absence by 9.30am.
- Following up all unexplained absences to obtain an explanation.

## **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

Parents have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend the school they are registered at on a regular, full-time basis.

Allowing children of compulsory school age to be absent from school without good reason is an offence. Persistent absence may result in the matter being reported to the Local Authority. Any problems over attendance should be discussed with the school at an early stage. It is every parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school, arrives on time, is properly equipped, suitably dressed and has a positive attitude to learn.

It is also the parent's responsibility to inform the school if their child is going to be absent and to provide an explanation for the absence.

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of legal responsibilities.
- Ensure children arrive punctually and well-prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence providing a reason for the absence and each day thereafter; unless agreed otherwise.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- Notify school of any changes to their contact details

## **Pupils leaving during the school day**

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside school time.
- Pupils must be signed out in the school office on leaving school and back in on their return.

## Registration

The school doors open at 08:40 and children are expected to be in school by 08:50 (Bamford) and the school doors open at 08:40 and children are expected to be in school by 08:55 (Grindleford) this gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using RM Integris. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

## Lateness

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 09:00 will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 09:30 will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 09:00 will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

If pupils are regularly late then a letter requesting an explanation will be sent to parents.

## Absences

It is the parent's responsibility to inform school by telephone as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

For absences beyond three days, parents should contact the school again to detail the reason for continued absence

Absences and the reasons given are recorded on RM Integriss.

## **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

## **Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time**

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of Absence Request Form available from the school office and handed in at least two school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 95%

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Bamford and Grindleford Primary Schools believe that there should be close partnership between the parents/carers and school. The Headteacher and staff will encourage open and honest dialogue with parents/carers, and follow up concerns. Incidents of persistent lateness will be discussed with parents by the Head teacher. Parents can contact the Head teacher with concerns and to ask for support. The Head teacher of each school can be contacted via the school office.

**A letter will be sent out if one of the following things happen:-**

- Attendance below 90% without good explanation
- No parental explanation for an absence
- Pattern of poor attendance emerging – e.g. every Friday off
- Lateness x 5 in a four week / monthly monitoring period
- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

## **National framework for penalty notices**

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

## Appendix 1 – Letter 1

### Parental Responsibility Letter

Dear

As you are aware, I am concerned about **NAME's** school attendance. I have enclosed a copy of **HIS/HER** attendance printout for your information. Whilst the average attendance for a child of **PHASE** age is **NUMBER** % your child's attendance is **NUMBER**%.

I am obliged to make you aware of your legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance. Under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 a parent is

guilty of an offence if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school.

If **NAME's** attendance continues to be unsatisfactory and **HIS/HER** absences marked as unauthorised then I will have no option but to refer your case to Derbyshire County Council for consideration of legal action. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine per child, per parent.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to **£1000**.
- Prosecution under s444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to **£2500 and/or a community order or imprisonment**.

In order to support you and **NAME** to improve the situation we would like to offer you **INSERT INITIAL SUPPORT OFFER/PACKAGE/MEETING AND NAME OF A LINK PERSON IN SCHOOL TO CONTACT**.

I will continue to monitor the situation but if **NAME's** attendance does not improve then legal action may follow. If you wish to talk to **ME/NAME**, TITLE regarding this issue please do not hesitate to contact me on the number at the top of this page.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Designated attendance lead

## **Appendix 2 – Letter 2**

Please note letter 1 must have been sent first

Failure to improve.

Date

Dear

As you know, **NAME's** attendance has been an ongoing concern and he/she is in the category of persistent absentee.

Unfortunately, despite our offers of support, **NAME** has continued to miss school without good reason and **HIS/HER** absences remain unauthorised.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly then their parent is guilty of an offence.

Consequently, I intend to forward your case to the Local Authority for consideration of legal proceedings against you.

Please contact **NAME OF MEMBER OF STAFF** on the telephone number at the head of this letter, if you wish further clarification on this matter.

Enc: Register Extract

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Designated attendance lead

### **Appendix 3 – copy of leave of absence request form**

**The Peak Federation**

**Bamford and Grindleford Primary Schools**

#### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM**

PLEASE NOTE - The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** state that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Child(ren) ..... Year Group .....

..... Year Group .....

..... Year Group .....

Childs Address .....

.....

Name of Applicant(s) and Address (if different).....

.....

.....

**I / We wish to apply for our child(ren) to be absent from school for EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES on the following dates.**

From..... To.....

Total number of days our child(ren) will be absent from school .....

Please supply in as much detail as possible the reason for your request and why you feel it is **exceptional circumstances**. Please include the names of the adult(s) who will be with your child(ren) during their absence from school.

Signed (both parents if applicable)

Date .....

.....

.....

**IF THE REQUEST IS FOR A FAMILY HOLIDAY PLEASE SUBMIT IT BEFORE THE HOLIDAY IS BOOKED.**