

Beckfoot Heaton Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Protocol

Updated September 2023



Beckfoot Heaton Primary School is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all children. For children to gain the best from their time at Beckfoot Heaton Primary School, it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all children unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The school actively promotes excellent attendance and discourages unjustified absence. 90% attendance sounds good to some people, but this is half a day missed every week:

100%	Excellent
Above 97%	Expected
Above 95% but below 97%	Satisfactory
Above 90%, but below 95%	A cause for concern
Below 90%	A serious cause for concern

If your child's attendance is...	Then your child has been absent...	Which equates to this many weeks...	And this much learning...	Over 5 years, this equates to...
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons	0.25 Year
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons	0.5 Year
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons	1 Year
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	288 lessons	1.25 Year

Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality prepares children for the disciplines of adult working life and is a key priority for the school.

Guiding Principles

- Beckfoot Heaton Primary School recognises that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school every day, (section 444 Education Act 1996).
- The school emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Beckfoot Heaton Primary School aims to ensure that all its children access an education which meets their needs and allows them to realise their potential.
- The school will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each child can engage in all opportunities offered.
- The school will work with children and their families to ensure every child attends regularly and punctually.

- The school will challenge those pupils and their parents/carers that give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- The school has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- The school will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage excellent attendance and learning.
- The school will have regard to the Equality Act and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence seriously affects their learning. Any child's absence can disrupt teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class too. Research has clearly shown that children perform significantly less well in exams and assessments if their attendance has been lower than average.

Legislation and Statutory Responsibilities

There are two types of absence:

- **Authorised** (where the school approves the pupil's absence e.g., absence due to sickness, religious observance, funerals);
- **Unauthorised** (where the school will not approve absence e.g., holidays during term time, taking children out without permission i.e., birthdays, shopping, parents/carers or siblings attending medical appointments).

Only the school, and not parents / carers, can decide whether or not to authorise an absence. This is written down in the Education Registration Regulations 2006. We will let you know if we are not authorising your child's absence.

Parent/carers are responsible under the Education Act 1996 for ensuring their child's full and regular attendance at the school while they are of compulsory school age. Our school works with the Local Authority when a child's unauthorised absence becomes too high.

On 1st April 2023 the local authority changed their guidelines around fining parents taking children out of school. Specifically, where families take two or more periods of unauthorised leave in a 12-month period, 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.

We will always offer you opportunities to talk to us and will try to help resolve things without going to court, but we will pursue legal action when this is necessary as every child has a right to education.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. In this situation, please talk to us so we can work together to help the child overcome any concerns about attending. The sooner we do this, the better.

Safeguarding

Beckfoot Heaton Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its children. Each child's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some children may be especially vulnerable. If your child does not attend school regularly, they may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding the interests of each child is the responsibility of everyone and within the context of the school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety and access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Pupils may be at risk of harm if they are not in school regularly. Learners who are missing from school are at significant risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, underachieving, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. We will do everything we can to ensure our learners are safe including as per guidance in KCSIE paragraph 102 schools where reasonably possible asking for more than one emergency contact per child that is registered with the school. As such having more than one emergency contact may mean these are used to support attendance where it is not possible to contact parent / carer including when addressing concerns if child is missing from education.

If a child is unexpectedly absent from school, all efforts will be made to assure their whereabouts and welfare as quickly as possible. Often this will be achieved via a call home but sometimes this may require a home visit that confirms the child's whereabouts. Please don't forget to email us on attendance@beckfootheaton.org to tell us if your child is absent for any reason.

The DfE guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' paragraph 102 states: "Where reasonably possible, schools and colleges should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or pupil". This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the school or college additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

What you can expect from Beckfoot Heaton Primary School

- We will do all we can to help pupils love learning at Beckfoot Heaton.

- We will promote excellent attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where pupil's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support pupils to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality

What Beckfoot Heaton Primary School expects from Pupils:

- To attend regularly and on time.

What Beckfoot Heaton Primary School expects from Parents/Carers:

Parents / Carers are asked to:

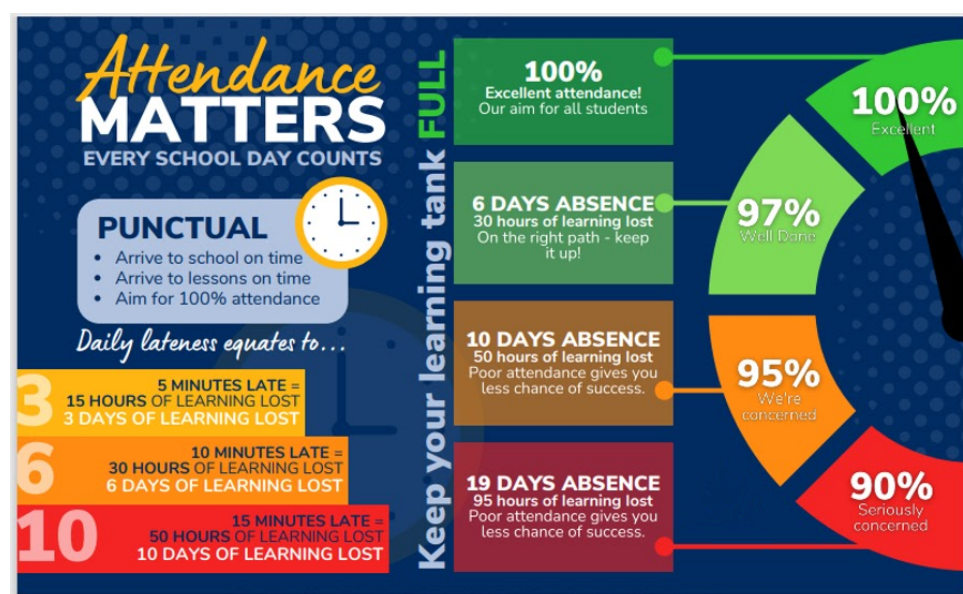
- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations – talk to them about their great life
- Immediately inform the school via email attendance@beckfootheaton.org if their child is unable to attend (by 8.15 am), including the reason for absence and expected date of return. If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bedtimes, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time.
- Provide school with multiple up-to-date contact information

Registration

- The law requires the register will be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and in the afternoon session. At Beckfoot Heaton Primary School this is at 8.30 a.m. and after lunch.
- Our gates open at 8.15 a.m. classroom doors at 8.25 a.m. and registration is at 8.30 a.m.
- Registers close at 8.45 a.m. in the morning. A late code (L) will be given to children who arrive later than 8.30 a.m. and before 8.45 a.m. Children who arrive after 8.45 a.m. will be given an unauthorised absence code (U).
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes ([see Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#))
- Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'Keeping Pupil Registers' published by the DfE.

Punctuality

- The school gates open at 8.15 a.m. and close at 8.25 a.m.
- Any pupil arriving after 8.26 am will enter via the main office. Children arriving after 8.30 a.m. are marked as late (L).
- Registration closes at 8.45 a.m.
- Children arriving from 8.46 a.m. will receive a U code (unauthorised absence) unless there is evidence of a medical appointment.



How we respond to Absence/Lateness

- We take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and if a pupil is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent / carer to explain the absence, the school will contact parents/carers to discuss their child's absence.

- The Attendance Officer will contact parents / carers via text if parents/carers have not contacted school. Parents / carers are asked to respond to this text with a reason for absence.
- Parents/carers can utilise the school absence email (attendance@beckfootheaton.org), or school phone number (01274 363070).
- The attendance team will carry out a home visit to ascertain the reasons for absence and confirm there are no safeguarding issues, if we do not hear from the family.
- All absence notifications will be kept on our attendance record.
- Where a child's absence is cause for concern, the school will write to parents/carers and/or invite the parents/carers into school in accordance with our Graduated Attendance Strategy.
- Ultimately, parents /carers can be fined for their child's poor attendance.

Holidays in Term Time

- The Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2013 removed all reference to "family holidays".
- In April 2017 the Supreme Court upheld the ban on parent / carers taking their children out of school for family holidays during term time. Delivering the verdict, Lady Hale said "Unauthorised absences have a disruptive effect, not only on the education of the individual child but also on the work of other pupils ... If one pupil can be taken out whenever it suits the parent/carers, then so can others ... Any education system expects people to keep to the rules. Not to do so is unfair to those obedient parent/ carers who do keep to the rules, whatever the costs or inconvenience to themselves."
- This means that the school will not authorise a child to take holidays during term time and parent/carers do not have the legal right to take children out of school for holidays.
- Any absence, including absence for holidays, interrupts the continuity of children's learning and children cannot "catch up". Research shows that by missing lessons, children fall behind as lessons are not repeated at a later date.
- Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take pupils out of school for holidays during term time as there is no entitlement for them to be taken out of school for such a reason. Any holidays are expected to be taken as part of the 175 days available outside term time.
- Our school works closely with the local authority and on 1st April 2023 the local authority changed their guidelines around fining parents taking children out of school. Specifically, where families take two or more periods of unauthorised leave in a 12-month period, 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.

- Parent/carers who wish to apply for a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, **must** complete a form from the attendance office **before** booking the travel.

Persistent Absence

A child becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

Any child whose attendance has reached the PA threshold (less than 90%) or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- Our Graduated Attendance Strategy will be initiated (see Appendix 1)
- An attendance contract to improve attendance, following a meeting between relevant school staff and parents/carers
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the school, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.
- Persistent Absence data is communicated to the Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

Medical Evidence

Where a child has an ongoing medical condition which is impacting on their attendance at school, it is the parent/carers responsibility to provide medical evidence. In exceptional circumstances, the school will ask for medical evidence to be provided directly from the GP, with consent of parents/carers.

Re-integration following Long-term Absence

Where a child has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, the school will:

- Welcome the child back to the school and value their return.
- Provide support for the child in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the school.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- Work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- Consider a personalised programme of return, if appropriate.
- Nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the child's return.
- Support the child with a personalised learning plan, to ensure successful catch-up.

Promoting Excellent Attendance and Punctuality

- It is the belief that all children are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all children.
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 95% will be set targets for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed, as per our Graduated Attendance Strategy (Appendix 1).
- Excellent and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of excellent attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Attendance Team at any time to discuss their child's attendance.
- Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those children whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Children who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the school.

Attendance Data and Targets

- The school target is 100% attendance.
- The target for all children is to strive for 100% attendance. Only by achieving full attendance can children expect to achieve their full potential.
- Attendance data will be collected and analysed and used to inform the school's attendance practices and interventions.
- Individual pupil data will be analysed and monitored to enable early intervention.
- Attendance data is provided on a half termly basis to the Trust.
- Attendance data and persistent absence data is communicated to the Local Authority.
- Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education.
- Parent/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at school under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- The school works in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility in ensuring regular school attendance. There are a range of legal interventions used for unauthorised absence i.e., Penalty Fine, Parenting Contracts and Orders, or the matter being placed before the Magistrates'
- Court with a possible fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.
- All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and to reduce absence.
- Our aim is to avoid legal intervention, wherever possible and we encourage parent/carers to contact us at the earliest opportunity to discuss any attendance concerns.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of the school have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
- Form positive relationships with children and parent/carers
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces excellent school attendance. For example, good teaching and learning experiences that encourage children to attend and achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Protocol and ensure that the protocol is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Protocol and are able to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2016 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Beckfoot Trust.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensure that all the above priorities are shared with and reinforced by all relevant school staff.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support children and their families.
- Use the standard documents to support a move to legal proceedings should that be necessary.

Teachers will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to children and their parent/carers
- Form positive relationships with children and parent/carers
- Welcome and value the attendance of all pupils to lessons.
- Ensure all children are accurately registered.
- Identify pupil absence to lessons and take appropriate action.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

- Work with identified children, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.
- Discuss attendance with parents/carers at Parents' Consultation Evenings.
- Ensure all unexplained absences are investigated and resolved.

Year leaders will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers.
- Monitor absence and attendance daily.
- Discuss absence and attendance concerns with pupils and set targets for improvement where appropriate.
- Contact parents / carers if no reason for absence is given.
- Contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Support pupils to improve their attendance.
- Promote excellent attendance through assemblies.
- Work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance for individual pupils.

Attendance staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to pupils and their parent/carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers.
- Take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the school, including improving attendance and reducing absence.
- Monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Receive and record calls and messages from parent/carers regarding pupil absence.
- Contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Conduct home visits where no reason has been given for absence or where there are other concerns.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate member of staff.
- Support the Local Authority Officer to improve attendance.

The Headteacher will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to pupils and their parent/carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers.
- Implement the Graduated Attendance Strategy (Appendix 1)

- Involve external agencies where appropriate.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate member of staff.

The Local Authority Officer will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to pupils and their parent/carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers.
- The Local Authority Officer will work with pupils whose attendance has fallen below 80% (although they will work with other pupils where appropriate).
- Parent/carers will be invited to a panel meeting with the Local Authority Officer and pupils will be placed onto an attendance contract.
- Where attendance does not significantly improve, legal action will be considered.
- Legal action can include prosecution, the issue of a fixed penalty notice, or an application of for an Education Supervision Order in the Family Court. If the Local Authority agrees to a prosecution the maximum fine is £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment

Legislation and Guidance:

- This protocol meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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 the protocol also links to statutory guidance in KCSIE: · 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
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 (with specific attention to paragraph 102)
- Working Together to improve attendance - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Appendix 1: Beckfoot Trust Graduated Attendance Strategy – Process to support excellent attendance and tackle persistent absence

	Staged Approach -	Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance (days)	Whole days absent	Learning hours lost
Celebrate all improvements in attendance	Celebrate and sustain Your child has high attendance. Well done 😊 We recognise and celebrate learners who attend school every day on time. We thank parents for their support and commitment to ensuring high attendance for their child.	Excellent	100%	190	0	0
			99%	188	2	10
		Very Good	98%	186	4	20
		Good	97% (Trust Target for all schools)	184	6	30
			96%	182	8	40
	Stage 1 – Pleasant Nudge Your child's attendance has fallen below our Trust target. We will let you know via text/letter that we are concerned. Improvements in attendance are expected and will be monitored by teachers and tutors.	Needs to improve	95%	181	9	45
			94%	179	11	55
			93%	177	13	65
	Stage 2 - Engage Your child is <u>at risk of being persistently absent</u> from school. This is when attendance falls below 90%. Actions need to be taken to improve attendance quickly. We will invite you to meet with attendance leaders and officers in school to discuss reasons for absence and set a target to improve. We can involve external agencies to support.	Identified for action	92%	175	15	75
			91%	173	17	85
	Stage 3- Attendance Contract 1 Your child is identified as <u>persistently absent</u> from school. You (and your child, where appropriate) will be invited to attend a meeting with leaders in school to discuss concerns. An attendance contract will be agreed to support improvements in attendance and monitored for 4 weeks. External agencies are likely to be involved to offer support.	Cause for concern	90%	171	19	95
			89%	169	21	105
			88%	167	23	115
			87%	165	25	125
			86%	163	27	135
	Stage 4 – Attendance Contract 2 Where there is little/no improvement to your child's attendance over the 4 weeks (and no genuine reason for absence) you will be invited to attend an Attendance Panel meeting with the Headteacher and a	Serious cause for concern	85%	162	28	140
			84%	160	30	150
			83%	158	32	160
			82%	156	34	170
			81%	154	36	180

	<p>member of the Local School Committee (with your child, where appropriate).</p> <p>Support and challenge to improve attendance will be agreed in Contract 2 and an attendance target set. Alongside the contract you will receive a final warning letter detailing actions that will be taken if attendance does not improve. Improvements are monitored for 4 weeks.</p>					
	<p><u>Stage 5 – Referral to Local Authority/Possible Prosecution + Attendance Contract 3</u></p> <p>Where there is little/no improvement in your child's attendance. You will be invited to meet with the LA, attendance leader and external agencies to discuss reasons for further absence. Attendance Contract 2 will be reviewed with you and your child (where appropriate).</p> <p>Where action is necessary, we will inform you of referral to L the Local Authority for prosecution. We will continue to monitor attendance and absence with Contract 3.</p>	Extreme cause for concern	80% and below	152	38	190