

At Claypool everyone is valued, inspired and nurtured on their individual journey of success.

Attendance Policy

Policy lead: A. Hulme

Last interim review by the Policy Lead	Autumn 2026
Last full review by the Policies Committee	Summer 2025

Next interim review by the Policy Lead	Autumn 2027
Next full review by the Policies Committee	Summer 2028

Introduction

At Claypool Primary School we aim to create an ethos of good attendance. We believe that if children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them they need to attend regularly. Under Section 36 of the Education Act 1944, parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. However parents are informed of the detrimental effects of sending their child to school when they are unfit through illness. They are encouraged to keep the child at home until such time that the child has recovered full health. This policy has been written in conjunction with the DfE guidance document 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

Safeguarding children who are absent from education

Children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. At this point, an Early Help assessment may be offered to assess need and provide appropriate support in a timely manner.

Any child absent from education repeatedly or for a prolonged period of time will be contacted on a daily basis and then referred to the Early Intervention Team if concerns persist.

Registration

Electronic attendance registers are kept in accordance with national guidelines. Pupils are marked on a class list each morning and afternoon session as either present or absent, and absence is recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Registers are marked in accordance with LA guidance.

Morning registration takes place at 8.55am. Any arrival at school after this time is marked as late unless previous authorisation has been given. Parents are informed of the necessity of contacting school in the first instance. Failure to do so results in a telephone call from the school's office staff. Afternoon registers are marked at the start of the afternoon session at 1pm.

Under Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Board of Governors are responsible for making sure that the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Sickness

Although full attendance is essential for children to make good progress in their learning there are times when sickness prevents them from attending school. Parents are encouraged to consider the child's health in the context of the school environment and to consider the health of the general school population. A poorly child cannot learn effectively at school and needs to be cared for at home. Illness easily spreads throughout a class and there are some cases when school insists a child spends time at home in order to reduce the spread of an infection. (See Infectious Diseases Advice from the LA kept in the school office.) Sickness must be reported to the school office on the first day of absence and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

Holidays (see appendix for further information)
Schools are unable to authorise holidays in term time and parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances can the Headteacher consider granting leave during term time.

- All holiday requests should be discussed with the Headteacher before any bookings are made.
- All holiday requests should be made in writing.
- Evidence may be requested to support an exceptional holiday request.
- Decisions will be made on a case by case basis.
- An absence that has not been agreed by the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Authorisation will not be granted retrospectively.

Once reasonable enquires have been made and safeguarding procedures followed, a child who is absent for longer than 20 days can be legally removed from the school roll.

Parents who do take their children out of school in term time on an unauthorised holiday could be prosecuted by the local authority. A penalty notice may be issued - currently at £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. This raises to £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in the matter going to court where other sanctions and/or prosecutions will be considered.

There is a national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a 3 year rolling period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) this will be considered for progression to prosecution.

Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- If a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, then this might constitute an exceptional circumstance.

To take a holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Criteria by which the Headteacher will make decisions concerning the authorisation of holiday absence

a) The general attendance of pupils will be considered. If a child has had a significant number of absences for any reason they will not be able to "afford" to miss any further schooling.
b) A holiday request for exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be approved unless the child's attendance is 95% or above for the past year.
c) Teachers will not set work for completion when a child is absent on holiday, but the child should be encouraged to read and keep a diary of their experiences.

Long term absence
When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send learning home, so that they can keep up their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Appendix

What can I do?

- Ensure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and for your child
- If your child is ill contact the school on the first day of absence and explain the circumstances
- If your child is away for other reasons let the school know, especially if you know in advance
- Do not take holidays or leave in term time
- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school.
- If you suspect your child is not happy in school you should contact the school as soon as possible
- Take an interest in your child's education, ask about their day, praise and encourage achievements at school

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

If you are experiencing problems with your child's attendance at school, it is really important that you work closely with school to resolve the matter.

Alternatively, for further guidance and support you can contact:

Child Employment and Enforcement Officer
Early Intervention Service
1st Floor, BASE
Marsden Road
Bolton BL1 2PF Tel:
01204 338173

Why is attendance so important?

Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in primary and secondary school.

Missing school has a huge impact on how well a pupil gets on at school. The more school a child misses, the harder it is for them to get into a routine of attending regularly and catch up on the work they have missed. Missing school can also leave a child more open to becoming involved in crime, either as an offender or as a victim.

Research shows that a year 11 pupil who has missed 17 days during the school year may get one grade less than they would have achieved had they attended regularly. A few days of absence could have a huge impact on a child's future opportunities.

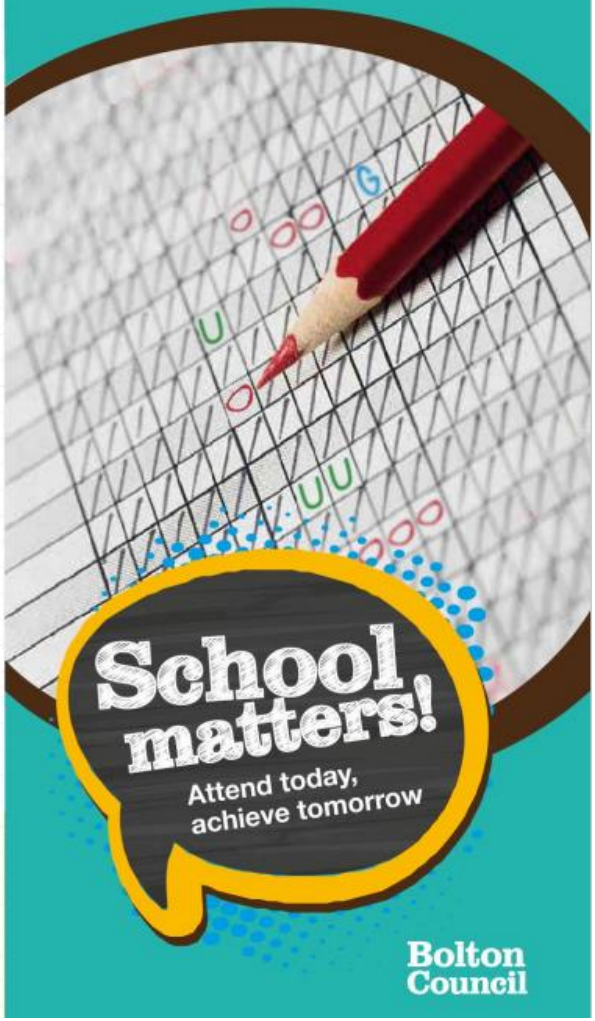
Every lesson counts
Improving attendance,
raising attainment
Moments matter
Attendance counts

The legal definitions of 'parent' are:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children's Act (1989)
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

School attendance and Penalty Notices

Information for parents and carers



Bolton Council

Bolton Council is committed to providing all children with the best start in life and works hard to ensure that all children in Bolton attend school regularly.

The majority of parents in Bolton ensure that their children attend school regularly.

What does the law say about school attendance?

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents or carers may be prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly and their absence is unauthorised (or in other words, the school cannot or has not given permission for them to be off school)

Bolton Council has the power to issue Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution. Penalty notices are issued to parents or carers who are considered capable of but are unwilling to work towards improving their child's attendance.

When will a penalty notice be issued?

Bolton Council will always work with schools, parents/carers and pupils to improve their attendance but will issue Penalty Notices where a pupil has missed at least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to unauthorised absence over a period of 10 rolling school weeks.

What is a notice to improve?

School may send you a notice to improve telling you that a Penalty Notice may be issued if the threshold of 10 sessions has been met.

It will include details of your child's absence, and the support school has already put in place. If you receive a notice to improve this is a further opportunity for you to work with school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice. During this period, your child must not have any further unauthorised absences from school. School is not required to send a notice to improve where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday taken during term time.

What is the cost of a Penalty Notice?

£160 if you pay within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, reducing to £80 if you pay within 21 days (Per parent per child). You must pay the whole of the amount owing in one payment – you cannot pay in instalments or just pay part.

With any second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the amount will be charged at £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.

There is a national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) this will be considered for progression to prosecution.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal by parents against a Penalty Notice.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay in full within 28 days, Bolton Council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

If proven this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending on individual circumstances.

If poor school attendance persists the Local Authority may also consider prosecution under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, **which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.**

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the penalty notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. A prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending on your circumstances.

The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty.

Improving attendance = Improving outcomes

Everyday counts, every day in school makes a difference to your child's future.