

Promoting Good Attendance:

A model policy for Bury schools

This model policy is based on the DfE's ['Working together to improve attendance'](#) guidance (May 2022). The policy will need to be personalised to reflect each school's culture and procedures to promote positive attendance. The policy also references Ofsted's report (February 2022) ['Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence.'](#)

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(Updated February 2024)



Bury and Whitefield

JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy for Promoting Good Attendance

Date: 1.2.24

Signed: *M.Kobak*

Date of Review: February 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
Expectations of pupils and parents	4
Daily routines	5
Reporting absence	5
Requesting leave of absence	6
Managing attendance	6
Voluntary support, formal support and statutory action	9
Fixed penalty notices	11
Appendix 1	12
Flow chart showing how schools, and local partners, work with families to improve attendance	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Bury and Whitefield Jewish Primary School we expect all pupils to:
- Attend every school day
 - Attend school punctually
 - Attend school prepared for the day
- 1.2 We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.
- 1.3 We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.
- 1.4 Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach. Our approach is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (May 2022) [Working together to improve school attendance](#) which applies from September 2022.
- 1.5 This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and the 1996 Education Act.
- 1.6 Our approach to securing good attendance is based on the principle of support first. In line with Ofsted's research, our approach can be summarised as *'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate.'*
- 1.7 Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.
- 1.8 In the case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough – see ['How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster'](#). Parents should follow the latest public health advice in relation to COVID-19.
- 1.9 This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.
- 1.10 This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive practice.

2 Expectations

- 2.1 It is our responsibility to maintain a culture that promotes good attendance which is supported by consistently applied systems.
- 2.2 Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance is Mrs Kobak.
- 2.3 Other staff in school who support attendance on a day to day basis are Mrs Whittington, Mrs Lewis and Mrs Whittam.
- 2.4 Staff who can provide support on attendance are Mrs Kobak, Mrs Whittington, Mrs Lewis, Mrs Whittam (SLT) and our SENCO Miss Gordon.
- 2.5 Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.6 We are committed to working with parents to promote positive attendance. We expect all our **parents** to:
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
 - Contact the school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. Emails for illness must be sent directly to the school office not class teachers or Mrs Kobak, this ensures they are read more quickly and children can be coded correctly. Any absence reported via the APP or email must be followed up by a phone call to explain exactly why a child is not in school. If we are unable to reach you by phone when your child is ill, we are duty bound to contact everyone on your contact list until we are able to ensure a child is safe.
 - Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
 - Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
 - Support us by becoming involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
 - Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- 2.7 We expect all our **pupils** to:
- Be aware of when they should attend school

- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn
- Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Communicate with parents/ carers to encourage a written explanation to be shared with school to explain any absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late

3 Daily routines

- 3.1 At BWJPS our teachers meet and greet our pupils on the playground (Y3 – 6) or at the classroom doors (EYFS – Y2). This begins at 8.45am each day. Pupils are then able to go into their classrooms.
- 3.2 Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.
- 3.3 Our school day begins at 8.45am. The morning register will open and be taken at 8.50am. Any pupil arriving after 8.55am is required to report to the main school office to sign in and provide a reason for lateness
- 3.4 If arrival is before 9.15am then the pupil will be recorded as late (Late **before** the close of register)
- 3.5 The school register will officially close at 9.30am. Any pupil arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session (Late **after** the close of register)
- 3.6 Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in further action being taken to support improved attendance
- 3.7 Our afternoon session begins at 1.15pm with a register taken at 1.20pm.
- 3.8 Our normal school day ends at 3.45pm (Y1 – 6) and 3.30pm for EYFS.

4 Reporting Absence

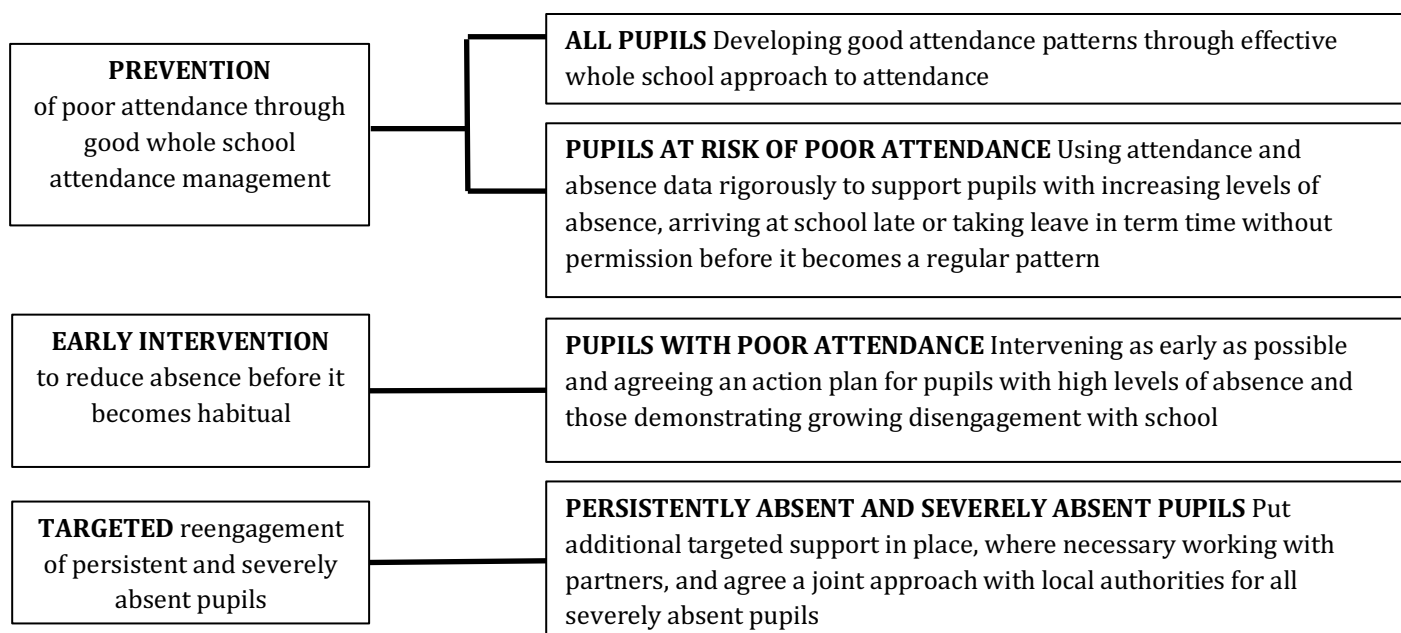
- 4.1 We expect a parent to call the school, on the first day of the child's absence, before 9.30am. This can still be done via the school app, or email to bwjp@bury.gov.uk, but it must be followed by a phone call to the school office, as we are required to get a full explanation of the absence. Informing us a child is 'unwell', is not a sufficient reason. You may be required to provide evidence supporting your explanation of the absence before it is authorised; where evidence is insufficient, the absence may still be marked as unauthorised.
- 4.2 If the absence continues, parents should contact the office **each day of absence** to identify the reason for absence and the expected date of return.
- 4.3 Where absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence must be obtained, in writing, by no later than 5 school days after the session.
- 4.4 If a child is absent, and we have had no contact from the parent to provide a reason for the absence, we will:
- Activate first day calling procedures after the register is closed at 9.30am.
 - If there remains no contact then a further telephone call will be made later that morning to the parent and, if no response, a call will be made to the pupil's other emergency contacts
 - If we cannot contact a parent and are concerned about the pupil then, a home visit may be carried out by a member of SLT or the SENCO. If the family is supported by a social worker then the social worker will be informed of the absence.
- 4.5 If we have concerns around a pupil's safety, we may also visit the home of the pupil or request a welfare check to be made by the police.
- 4.6 We will telephone home if a pupil leaves school without permission.

5. Requesting leave of absence

- 5.1 A leave of absence will only be granted (authorised) under exceptional circumstances. It is therefore unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. In making our decision we will take into account the specific circumstances and context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Requests for a leave of absence should be made in writing to the head teacher giving as much notice as possible.

6 Managing Attendance

- 6.1 We will inform parents about their child’s attendance at the end of each term and in the end of year report, highlighting any amount of time missed and the impact on learning. Any concerns will be raised with parents directly. Including letter sent directly to families where persistent absence has been raised as an issue.
- 6.2 We value and recognise the importance of good attendance.
- 6.3 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable (see 6.4 below). We will also analyse specific groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance.
- 6.4 Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance or are identified as being either persistently absent or severely absent.



- 6.5 Our strategy for using data to target our work on attendance, including reducing persistent absence (pupils who are absent for 10% or more sessions) and severe absence (pupils who are absent for 50% or more sessions) is based on the table on the next page:

0 – 4 days missed	98 – 100% attendance	PREVENTION Whole school approach/ celebrating good attendance	Talking to children who have good attendance and making parents aware.
5 – 9 days missed	95– 97.9% attendance	PREVENTION Pupils at risk of poor attendance	Making parents aware that attendance is falling in end of term letter and phone calls.
10– 19 days missed	90.1 –94.9% attendance	EARLY INTERVENTION Pupils with poor attendance	Discussions with parents and official letters sent.
20 or more days missed	90% or below attendance	PERSISTENTLY ABSENT 10% or more absence SEVERELY ABSENT 50% or more absence	Meeting held with parents to identify support needed.

- 6.6 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts of pupils that need support. We will focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- 6.7 If we have concerns about a pupil’s attendance and/ or their punctuality then we will work in partnership with parents to support improvements. This may involve a meeting in school to support the family in identifying, and addressing, the barriers to attending school and/ or attending school on time.
- 6.8 We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child’s life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be needed. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with us to identify the most appropriate support. Where relevant, the support would involve following the Emotionally Based School Avoidance pathway.
- 6.9 We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

- 6.10 We will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable to discuss attendance at, and engagement with, school. This will include pupils who are classed as being persistently absent (10% or more absence), those who are severely absent (50% or more absence), those with patterns of absence and pupils who show an unexpected or unexplained dip in attendance.
- 6.11 Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help support through the completion of the 'Story So Far' tool, or through discussion within a team around the school meeting.
- 6.12 We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- 6.13 If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.
- 6.14 If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures

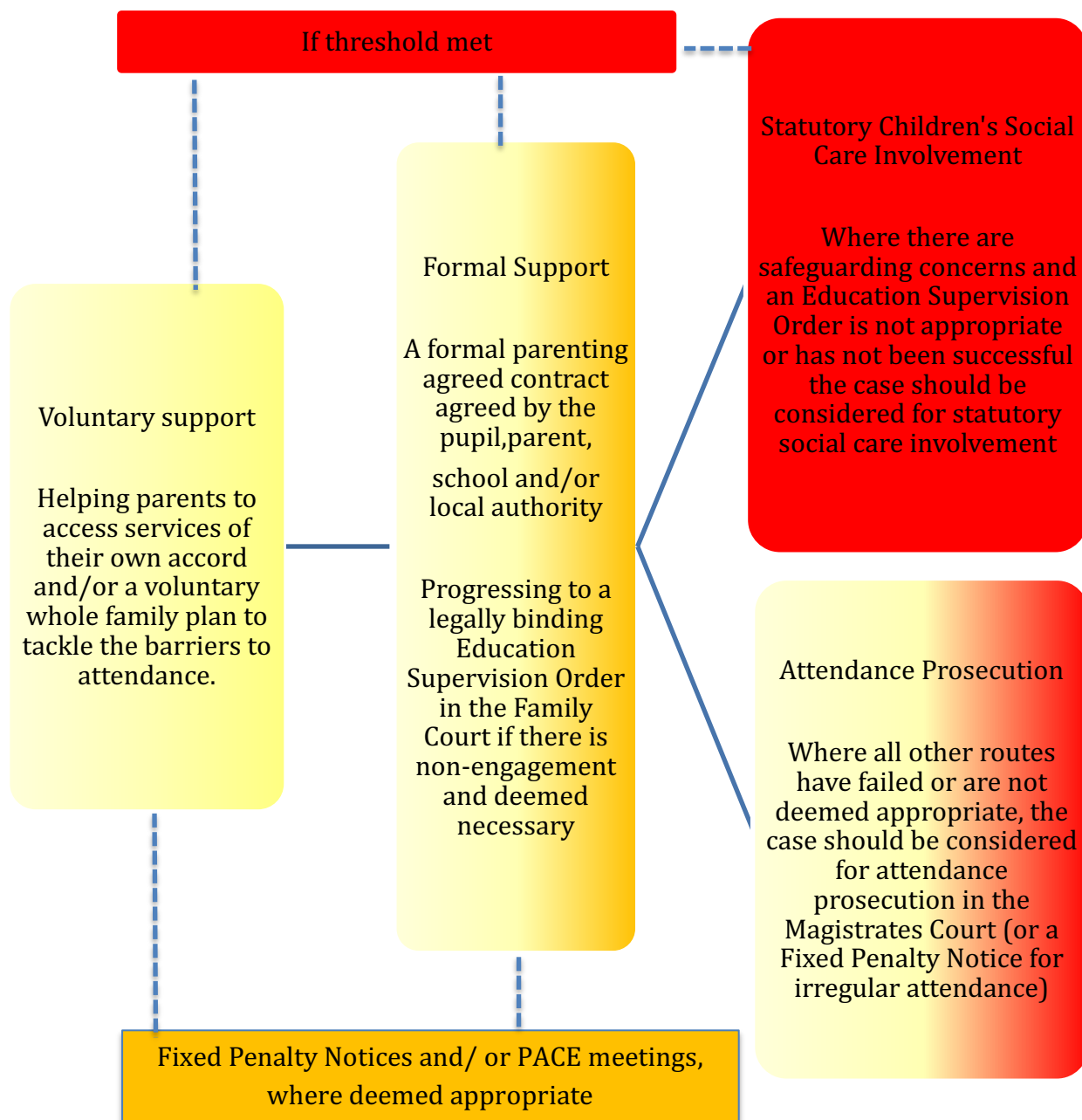
7. Voluntary support, formal support and statutory action

- 7.1 We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. These may include:
- A recognised whole school approach that celebrates achievement in school
 - Reward systems for positive behaviours
 - Discussion with parents and pupils
 - Discussion with the Virtual School where the child is looked after and/ or has a social worker
 - Working with attendance professionals, internal and/ or external to the school
 - Attendance panels
 - Attendance support plans
 - Attendance report cards
 - Referrals to support agencies
 - Learning mentors
 - Pupil Voice Activities
 - Friendship groups
 - Personal, social and health education
 - Anxiety-based school avoidance resources
 - Trauma-informed approaches
 - Early help referral options
 - Family learning
 - Reward systems
 - Time limited part-time timetables

- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion resources
- Reintegration support packages

7.2 Support offered to families, both internally and externally, will be child-centred, trauma informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

7.3 Our approach to attendance management is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention and targeted support. At all stages we aim to work in partnership with parents/ carers to address any barriers to attendance and/ or punctuality together. Where support is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.



- 7.4 We will work with Bury local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils’ right to an education. These are:
- Parenting contracts
 - Education supervision orders
 - Attendance prosecution
 - Parenting orders
 - Fixed penalty notices (see section 8)
- 7.5 Decisions on which intervention to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family.

8 Fixed penalty notices

- 8.1 School and the local authority will have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 8.2 Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.
- 8.3 We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended in 2013, where support to secure regular attendance has not been successful. Fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holiday in term time.
- 8.4 Fixed penalty notices can 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 fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

Note: This policy meets the requirements of the department for education's [working together to improve school attendance guidance](#) and referenced the statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties governing 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) Regulations 2007 (and 2013 amendment)

This policy should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, our school's child protection and safeguarding policy and our school's behaviour policy

Appendix 1 Flow chart showing how schools, and local partners, work with families to improve attendance

