



KING EDWARD VI BALAAM WOOD ACADEMY

Educational excellence for our City

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Attendance and Punctuality Policy	
Responsible Board	Welfare Committee and School Governing Board
Policy Responsible Person	K Lynch Assistant Headteacher
Date Adopted	October 2021
Reviewed	October 2023
Review Date	October 2024

1. Current Context

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils 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 both primary and secondary school.”

The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence. This policy has been updated in line with DFE ‘School Attendance’ guidance and ‘Addendum: recording attendance in relation to Covid-19 in 2020-21’. (August 2020)

Parents* are expected to perform their **legal duty** by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time”.

**Definition of Parents – DFE Advice on School Attendance A*

parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the pupil that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

2. Policy update on COVID-19

The school follows current guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID19) from Public Health England and the Department of Health. Updated guidance will be shared with parents as required, in terms of periods of self-isolation. We have updated our guidance to ensure absolute clarity regarding the current legality around school attendance and Covid. Attendance is mandatory.

The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents’ duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools’ responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities’ codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children absent education In line with our transition to living with Covid-19, the

government and public health authorities no longer advise young people under 19 to get tested, even if they have the usual symptoms of Covid. Unless you are specifically directed to get your child tested for Covid, they can attend school as usual. If your child has a positive Covid-19 test, the current guidance is that they should try and stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days. After 3 days, if they feel well, they can return to school. The risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Children and young people who live with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 should continue to attend school as normal.

In all cases of self-isolation, we ask parents/carers to inform us immediately about the outcome of a test. In line with DFE guidance, we should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation. However, for the safety of all other members of the community, we would ask parents/carers to provide this evidence if they are able or willing to.

3. Principles of the King Edward VI Balaam Wood Attendance Policy

At King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping pupils achieve the best that they can be. Education is important. Pupils should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. All research shows that pupils who attend well achieve well.

- *6 out of 10 pupils with over 95% attendance (missing no more than 10 days a year) gain 5 GCSE A* - C grades*
- *Only 1 in 10 pupils who are poor attendees gain 5 GCSE A* - C grades*
- *2 in every 10 attendees leave school with no qualifications at all*

Descriptor	Attendance	Equals absent number of days lost	Learning hours lost
Excellent	100%	0	0
	99%	2	10
Good	98%	4	20
	97%	6	30
	96%	7.5	37.5
Satisfactory	95%	9.5	47.5
Unsatisfactory	94%	11	55
	93%	13	65
	92%	15	75
	91%	17	85

Concern	90%	19	95
	89%	21	105
	88%	23	115
	87%	25	125
	86%	27	135
Serious cause for concern	85%	28.5	142
	84%	30.5	152
	83%	32	160
	82%	34	170
	81%	36	180

The government has laid down guidelines, which they expect pupils at secondary school to achieve in terms of attendance. They are set at 95% attendance.

A pupil will fall below 95% if they miss as little as half a day over a 2-week period

At King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy, it is our aim to reduce the difference towards the national average for overall attendance and persistent absenteeism.

It is the expectation and the target for all pupils to achieve **at least 96%** attendance.

There are a variety of reasons for pupils missing school. Some are unavoidable but we would ask that you support us in ensuring that your child's attendance meets both the school and the government's expectations. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties are best sorted out by the school, the parents/carers and the pupil at an early stage. We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. The school undertakes a wide range of measures to support pupils where attendance at school is an issue. Where there may be an issue and we fail to see an improvement it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the pupils receives the support required to bring about an improvement.

4. The school's programme to monitor attendance:

GRADE	MONITERED BY	DESCRIPTION
EXCELLENT	FORM TUTOR	Your child's attendance is above 98%. As well as being an excellent attender your child will almost certainly achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education or the world of work
GOOD	FORM TUTOR	Your child's attendance is 96-97% Your child is likely to achieve their grades that will give them real opportunities to continue their studies or in the world of work.

SATISFACTORY	FORM TUTOR	Your child's attendance is 95% and is in line with national expectations. Your child is likely to achieve their target grade but their outcomes will be improved further if their attendance improves.
UNSATISFACTORY	HEAD OF YEAR	Your child's attendance is 94-90%. They are below the national government threshold of 95% Your child will miss up to 18 days each school year and this will make it difficult for them to achieve their best
CONCERN	SENIOR LEADER	Your child's attendance is between 85-90%. Parents / Carers may face a fixed penalty fine as your child's attendance is below 90% and they are 'Persistent Absentees' <u>Your child is missing so much time from The Academy that it will be difficult for them to keep in touch with lessons or work</u>
SERIOUS CONCERN	DEPUTY HEADTEACHER	Your child's attendance is below 85% You need to TAKE ACTION NOW, as you will face a fixed penalty fine or further legal prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve! <u>Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be almost impossible for them to keep in touch with lessons or work!</u>

5. National Context

The 1996 Education Act (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by 'regular' attendance at school or 'otherwise'. The 2008 Education and Skills Act (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stages compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving higher standard. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).

(DFE guidance – May 2022)

6. Roles and Responsibilities:

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Governors

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance
- evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy

Headteacher

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately record individual pupil, group and whole school attendance patterns.

Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)

- To monitor individual pupil, year group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To decide whether or not to authorise requested periods of absence.
- To make a judgement whether an absence that has not been requested is authorised or unauthorised.
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To ensure appropriate systems are followed if a child is deemed to be absent from education (CME)
- To co-ordinate communication with external agencies (ie – Police, Early Help, Children's Social Care, SENAR, Forward Thinking Birmingham) for vulnerable students and/or students deemed to be at risk of harm as a result of non-attendance.
- To implement attendance interventions and reward systems

Head of Year

- To monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils in their respective year group
- Meet with parents/carers to set targets for Attendance Action Plans (See Appendix 1) and review outcomes
- Undertake 'Three Houses' assessments and facilitate appropriate early help support measures to improve a student's attendance and educational outcomes.
- To celebrate excellent attendance through rewards and celebration assemblies

Attendance Manager

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of Attendance data.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality are an issue, including regular meetings with the Assistant Headteacher, Head of Year, SENCO and external agencies
- To write to parents/carers regarding their child's attendance, at least termly, and more often for those whose attendance is causing concern.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To prepare relevant attendance reports, when requested to do so by the Assistant Headteacher or Head of Year
- Where the school are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will contact parents/carers by text/telephone call on the first day.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of the week, preparing letters on behalf of the Assistant Headteacher where a satisfactory reason has not been established.
- To ensure that Fast Track Procedures are implemented in cases where persistent absence exists.
- To co-ordinate 'Child Absent from Education' (CME) referrals as required

Education Welfare Officer

- To support the whole school response to attendance, through regular meetings and the monitoring of individual children's attendance.
- To work effectively with families to improve educational outcomes of pupils.
- To ensure that Fast Track Procedures are implemented in cases where persistent absence exists.

7. Daily Procedures:

Registration

Under the 2006 Education Regulations, the school is legally required to register pupils twice daily. Registration takes place at 8.45 a.m. and again at 2.05 p.m. It is essential that all pupils are registered on both occasions. This is the responsibility of the form tutor in the morning and their P5 classroom teacher in the afternoon.

We encourage pupils to be in school by 8.40am, all pupils must be in school in preparation for the register being taken at 8.45am. At this time they should collect items for the day and

make sure that, they are aware of any changes / arrangements to the day's activities. It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day. **It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a pupil checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill

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8. Absence from School

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under the 1996 Education Act, parents commit an offence if the child does not attend school regularly. ***If your child cannot come to school because of illness, you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone.*** If no message is received we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' visit. Parents/Carers are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a letter confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school.

Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school may request medical evidence if a parent rings school to confirm the pupil is unwell: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The Head Teacher may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

The school **may** authorise absence under certain specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Head Teacher in advance to secure authorisation. This **may** include work related interviews and meetings with external agencies (i.e. - Forward Thinking). The Head Teacher **may** also authorise events where pupils are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

Parents/carers are encouraged to read the Public Health England publication 'Guidance on Infection Control in schools and other childcare settings' (September 2014) as it provides useful guidance on whether an illness necessitates pupils taking time off school. This has been updated in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (June 2020).

9. Authorised Absence from school

Authorised Absence from School According to the DFE guidance (August 2020), the following codes are to be used for authorised absences on the register:

Code I: ILLNESS (not medical or dental appointments) We will authorise absences due to illness (physical or mental health) unless we have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness.

If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, we will request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. We will record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness and will advise parents in such cases. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. However, we encourage parents/carers to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code C: Other circumstances This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, i.e. – family funeral.

Code D: Dual Registered This code will be used if a student is registered at two schools.

Code B: Off-site educational activity This code will be used when a student is present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school, supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard students. This code will not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a student is at home doing school work. We will ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies us of any absences by individual students. We will then record the student's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code E: Suspension from school If no alternative provision is made for a student to continue their education whilst they are suspended but still on the admission register, they will be marked absent in the attendance register using the appropriate attendance code.

Code E. Alternative provision will be arranged for each suspended pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they will be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code J: Interview This code will be used when it has been agreed that the student can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam.

Code P: Approved sporting activity This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. – training sessions, trials and sporting events.

Code R: Religious Observation We will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. The school will only authorise oneday absence for religious events.

Code V: Educational visits and trips This code will be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work Experience Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. We will ensure we have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual students. Any absence will be recorded using the relevant code.

10. Unauthorised Absence from school

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. These are an **offence** by the parent. Such circumstances include:

- A pupil not attending school to go shopping for school clothes
- A pupil not attending school as it is their birthday or the birthday of a family member
- A pupil not attending school as the family have gone to the airport to meet a visiting relative
- A pupil not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member

- A pupil not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday
- A pupil not attending school as they are looking after younger siblings
- A pupil attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons

11. Medical Appointments

We do appreciate that it is often difficult for parents/carers to obtain written confirmation of medical appointments. Parents/carers can obtain 'Medical Authorisation Cards' from school to take with them to the doctors to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment. (See below) Parents/carers must ensure the card is stamped, dated and signed by the practice to confirm their child has attended a medical appointment.



To whom it may concern:

King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy is committed working with pupils and parents / carers to improve pupil attendance and achievement by reducing absence.

Please confirm by signature or practice stamp that (insert pupil name)
 _____ **has attended the surgery or practice today.**

Is this condition likely to impact further on their school attendance? YES / NO

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Parents/Carers are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments **outside school hours wherever possible**. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance so a decision can be made whether to authorise the absence or not.

12. Safeguarding

The school reserves the right to invite parents/carers into the school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, i.e. –sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, radicalisation. This may be the case particularly if a parent/carer requests a leave of absence during term time.

In addition, if the school suspects that a pupil may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the Safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, i.e. – social care (Birmingham’s Children’s Trust), police. The school will inform parents/carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent/carer.

13. Children Absent from Education

The school recognises that when a child goes absent from school it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, i.e. – sexual abuse or exploitation. The school follows the Birmingham LSCB procedures “Identifying and maintaining contact with children absent or at risk of going absent from Education 2013”. Under section 8h of the Education Regulations Act (2006) The school will make ‘reasonable’ enquiries into the location of pupils with 5 days continuous unauthorised absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time. A referral will be made to the ‘Child Absent from Education’ (CME) to be investigated further by their safeguarding panel and appropriate interventions taken at that level, i.e. – refer to police.

The school reserves the right, however, to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children’s Social Care, Police Safe and Well-being referral, CME) if any child is absent from school for more than five days without confirmation from parents. Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents to ensure the child is safe and well, including home visits by the Attendance Manager. The school will contact relevant agencies after two days absence without confirmation from parents/carers if the child is subject to a ‘Child in Need’ plan or considered vulnerable in other ways.

There are many circumstances where a child may become absent from education, as outlined below;

- Pupils at risk of harm / neglect (the school will follow standard Child Protection procedures for referrals to social care / police)
- Children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families (the school will inform local authority when a GRT student leaves school without identifying a new destination school.
- Families of Armed Forces (the school will contact MOD Children’s Education Advisory Service for advice on making arrangements for continuity of education)
- Absent children / runaways (direct referral to Children’s Services and Police)
- Children supervised in the Youth Justice system
- Children who cease to attend a school

When a pupil returns from a period of extended absence appropriate daily attendance checks will be carried out and their attendance, behaviour, emotional and physical wellbeing will be monitored closely by the safeguarding team in school. Parents/carers will be invited into school with the pupil to meet a member of the Guidance/Safeguarding Team or Senior Leader) as part of the reintegration programme and relevant support will be offered to the pupil / family as necessary.

15. Reluctance to go to school:

Sometimes pupils seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case, please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to the relevant Form Tutor, HOY or member of the Guidance Team. This may involve working with external agencies. i.e. STICK Team, Pathfinder, PAUSE, Forward Thinking Birmingham

16. Sharing Panel Placement and Alternative Provision

Pupils can be placed on Off Site Directions through Managed Move or Passport placements via the Oaks Sharing Panel. Alternatively, pupils could be placed at Alternative Provision placements in Years 9-11. In these cases, the Attendance Manager will ring the placement school or provider on a daily basis to monitor attendance. Any concerns regarding a pupils' attendance will be referred to the Assistant Headteacher Mr K Lynch and parents/carers will be contacted and a meeting arranged, if necessary, with parents/carers and staff at the placement school or provider. It is our responsibility to ensure pupils attend placements on a daily basis and, if applicable, the school will engage with external agencies (i.e. – social workers / family support workers / youth offending team) to ensure the student attends the placement each day.

17. Elective Home Education

Under the DFE guidance on attendance (March 2013); 'Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at a school. If a parent wishes to withdraw a child from school, the child will be known as 'Electively Home-Educated'. Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from school will be required to confirm this in writing to the Head Teacher (Mr McGarvey). The school will forward this letter to the Local Authority and the child will be removed from the Admission register at the King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy. The Local Authority will then determine whether or not to accept this new arrangement or challenge it. However, parents are unable to withdraw their child from school if they are subject to a 'School Attendance Order'.

Children with Special Educational Needs statements (Education, Health and Care Plans) can be home educated. Where the statements sets out special educational provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. The local authority must review the child's statement / EHC Plan annually.

18. Part time or reduced timetables

Updated DFE guidance (June 2021) states that 'in very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. A part-time timetable

must not be treated as a long-term solution and must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision'. A part-time/reduced timetable may be appropriate under the following circumstances:

- As part of an in-school support package – school, parent/carers and other professionals (ie – social worker, family support worker, health professional) agree that a short-term (no longer than six weeks) reduced timetable would support a pupil who has become disaffected, to be supported back into full-time provision.
- For medical reasons – if a student has a serious medical condition, where recovery is the priority outcome. These arrangements would be made as part of a medical plan agreed with health professionals.
- Reintegration – as part of a planned reintegration programme into school following, for example, an extended period out of school following exclusion, non-attendance, school refusal.

A parent/carers must consent to this arrangement by signing an agreement form. By signing the agreement, parent/carers will confirm they will take responsibility for the student when working at home and guaranteeing the student will be supervised at all times at home. The objectives of any part-time/reduced timetable will be clearly recorded in this agreement, along with the agreed timescale (no more than six weeks).

A staged part-time/reduced timetable will only be used for a student with an Education, Health and Care Plan after consultation with and agreement from relevant agencies (ie – SENAR). During this period, the school will continue to ensure the provision specified in the EHC plan is fully delivered.

Where a part-time/reduced timetable has been formally agreed, the sessions the student is not expected to attend will be marked with the C code unless arrangements for attendance at a supervised alternative provider are made. In that instance the B code would be used providing the student attended the alternative provision on that day. A student on a part-time/reduced timetable could still be a 'persistent absentee' in law should the number of sessions the child is not expected to attend constitutes more than 10% of all available sessions.

In line with DfE guidance (June 2021), the attendance officer will complete the required online form to notify the Local Authority when a part-time/reduced timetable has been agreed for an individual pupil.

19. Leave of Absence in term time

The total number of days missed due to absence in the academic year 2018/2019 was 41 million in the UK.

In March 2017, The Supreme Court confirmed the definition of regular attendance as 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by school'. If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time we advise parents to send a letter into the school outlining the reasons for and dates of the leave of absence. Parents will then be invited into school to attend a meeting with the Deputy Headteacher to discuss the request, complete the necessary paperwork and provide confirmation of travel arrangements (i.e. – flights details /

tickets). During the meeting a date will be agreed by which the pupil must return to school after the leave of absence.

Under the DFE 'Advice on School Attendance', parents can no longer expect schools to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday for up to 10 school days per year. The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. For example, there may have been a bereavement in the family or other serious circumstances or the Headteacher may be aware that a family is under strain and in need of time together.

The Headteacher will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. **From this perspective, leave of absence in term time is no longer a parental right and will only be authorised at the Head Teacher's discretion.** Under DFE guidelines schools will notify the Local Authority if a parent/s takes leave of absence without the Headteacher's permission. In these cases, the G code will be used on the register to show this absence is unauthorised.

Under these circumstances, the school will apply to the **Local Authority (Fast Track)** for a **Penalty Notice Fine** (£60-£120) to be issued by the Court Section or other legal proceedings by the Local Authority. The £60 Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full separately by both parents within 21 days and will rise to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, parents can be prosecuted under section 444(1), the Education Act 1996.

Where a child has unauthorised term, time leave but does not meet the criteria for 'Fasttrack to Attendance', schools can use an 'add on' legal process, the 'Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process'. The Local Authority can take legal action and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine under the following circumstances:

- a pupil's absence is marked as an unauthorised absence (G code), i.e. –family holiday – not agreed or extra days absence in excess of the agreement;
- a pupil has been absent for a minimum of 5 school days of G code and has had 5 school days of other unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months;
- a pupil has been absent for at least 10 school days of G codes, where they have been no other unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months

In addition, if the pupil does not return within 14 days of the agreed return date the school has the right to remove the pupil from the school register without parental consent. This would mean the pupil would lose their place at the school. It is also important for parents to note that the pupil may also be removed from the school register if the parent decides to remove the pupil from the country for an extended period of time (more than six weeks).

It is important for parents / carers to note that the school will not authorise ANY leave of absence unless the school feels the circumstances are unavoidable.

Additionally, as previously outlined in the policy, the school reserves the right to either contact the parents / carers directly or make an immediate referral to social care or the police if the school feels a pupil is potentially at risk being taken out of school during term time. This is particularly relevant to concerns schools may have about sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and radicalisation.

The school also reserve the right to request parents/carers provide medical evidence if there is suspicion a pupil is away and leave has not been formally requested by parents. This is due to the high number of unauthorised term time holidays nationally at certain points of the year, i.e. – around school holidays.

The school will seek advice from the Local Authority if a pupil fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and the school and local authority have made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the pupil. **This applies to leaves of absence that are both authorised and unauthorised by the school.** As a result, the school may remove the pupil from roll under such circumstances. However, we will keep the pupil on roll if the family remain in contact with the school even though the pupil has not returned to the school by the agreed date.

In line with current guidance on COVID-19, parents/carers should fully consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X will be used in the register.

20. Persistent Absenteeism

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of pupils whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. **Pupils with attendance below 90% fall into the ‘Persistent Absentee’ category.** This is particularly relevant if any of the child’s absences are unauthorised.

According to the DFE guidance (August 2020); ‘If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority’. In addition, ‘Local authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child’s regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)’

Monitoring the attendance of all pupils is a priority for King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy. Therefore, all pupil’s attendance will be monitored by a member of staff, these include form tutors, Head of Year, SLT and Governors. King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy use a wide range of supportive interventions to support pupil attendance. The academy may request a meeting with parents/carers whenever the staff member monitoring raises attendance concerns.

The school will follow the guidelines outlined by the BCC's **Fast Track Process**. As soon as attendance becomes a concern, parents/carers will be advised via a letter from the Headteacher and will be invited in to attend an informal meeting where strategies to support the child's attendance can be explored. The school will also undertake a piece of work with the pupil (Three Houses) where any obstacles to education can be identified and offer Early Help support. If a pupil does not attend school in the autumn term 2020, despite the agreed support systems put in place by the school, absences will be marked as unauthorised and will contribute to any Fast Track action taken by the academy.

If the child continues to have periods of unauthorised absence, parents will be invited to attend a formal school attendance review meeting (SARM) where clear actions will be agreed and expectations about attendance including legal consequences of further absence will be discussed. Following this, if the pupil has one further unauthorised absence, the process will be escalated and a formal warning notice (ELIT1) will be issued. The school will continue to use its discretion to determine if any absence after this time is authorised or unauthorised, in line with DFE guidance on absences relating to COVID-19, during the autumn term 2020.

The pupil's attendance will then be closely monitored for a period of 10 school weeks. If at any point in this period the pupil accumulates 10 further unauthorised absences (5 school days) a Family Information Sheet will be completed by the Attendance Officer and sent to Birmingham City Council's Court section.

Court section will consider proceedings under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and 2007 Anti-Social Behaviour Act. This could result in a penalty notice being issued to parents/carers or court proceedings under the 'Single Justice' process. **A Penalty Notice will be issued for £60 to parents.** This will be issued to both parents even if one of the parents does not live with the pupil. Each parent will have 21 days to make payment. This will rise to £120 if the initial fine is paid between 22 and 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. There is no right of appeal by parents against the penalty notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice Fine will result in further legal action being taken by the courts, with the maximum fine currently £2,500 or three months in prison. These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in parents/carers have a criminal record.

Under the 1989 Children Act, the Local Authority has the power to issue an **Education Supervision Order** (ESO) and place a child under their supervision on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly. The Local Authority may use an ESO as an interim measure before moving directly to prosecution.

Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a pupil continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a **Parenting Order**. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling. If

the unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent/s but previous parental failure to engage with school and local authority can be cited.

If a Penalty Notice Fine is issued by the court, the school will be required to continue to monitor the pupil's attendance and begin the Fast Track process again if the pupil has a further 20 sessions (10 days) unauthorised absence from the date the fine was issued by the court. This may result in further legal action taken against the parent if the pupil continues to have periods of unauthorised absence from school.

21. Punctuality

The 1996 Education Act requires that every pupil should attend school and be on time. It is better to be late than not to be in school at all, **BUT** when pupils arrive late it makes it difficult for everyone. The teacher has to stop and wait for the latecomer to settle down, the rest of the class is disrupted and the latecomer misses the, often vital, first part of the lesson and will receive a consequence.

Pupils who arrive after registration must enter through the main reception and sign in. Failure to sign in can lead to consequences being issued.

If you are aware your child will be arriving late, please send them with a note explaining the circumstances or contact the school by telephone, i.e. - unplanned appointment at the doctors.

We do appreciate that some of our pupils rely on public transport, which may make them late for school. However, it the parents/carers responsibility to make alternative arrangements to get their child to school if they are aware of on-going issues with public transport and road networks that may result in their child being repeatedly late for school. The school site is open from 8.20 am each day for pupils. If there are any problems, please contact Reception.

Pupils who are up to 10 minutes late for school will receive a 30-minute after school detention on the same day. Pupils will receive a 45-minute after school detention on the same day if they are 10 to 30 minutes late. Pupils who arrive later than 30 minutes will receive a 60-minute same day detention after school.

The Attendance Manager will meet with the pupil and their parents / carers if they are late to school more than 10 times. This meeting will be repeated every tenth time the pupil is late for school. Parents/carers will be invited to attend a 'Governors Attendance Panel' meeting if their child is late for school more than 25 times in a year.

22. Communication with parents

Letters sent to parents in relation their current progress at school also contain information on the child's attendance. Each letter also has an Attendance Certificate attached. This allows

parents to be informed of both their child's attendance and punctuality. Parents are also informed about their child's attendance, at parent's evenings and Progress Review meetings

23. Rewards and Incentives

Pupils are rewarded for excellent attendance in many different ways. There are Bronze, Silver, Gold attendance certificates. This is celebrated each half term in a celebration assembly. Form Attendance information distributed to form tutors and updated weekly, form group incentives and rewards are given. There is a half term draw for pupils who achieve 100% attendance, they receive, 10 House Points, certificate. Pupils with the most improved attendance rates are also rewarded as a further incentive. At key intervals over the year, we implement the 15-day attendance challenge, where all pupils regardless of their attendance prior to the twenty days can be rewarded for a period of excellent attendance. There are also targeted rewards for key groups to support with improving their attendance.

24. Improving attendance – WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:

1. Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously this is not always possible but in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that she can complete most of her timetable before leaving.
2. Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school. Try to make sure they have an alarm clock that is reliable and not their mobile phone. Make sure that they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Bags, books and other equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's planner can help you to do this.
3. Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
4. Check with school reception or Attendance Manager if you have any concerns about whether your child is present in school. Our Attendance Manager is Mrs Nolan
5. Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances please contact the Headteacher and decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
6. Encourage your child to come to school even if they are feeling slightly unwell. Many aches and pains are forgotten when they are with friends and the school will contact you if it becomes necessary.
7. Talk positively about going to school – "What was good about school today?" "Did anything funny happen?"

8. Monitor your child's internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.
9. Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact your Child's Form Tutor or a member of the Guidance team before the concerns escalate.

25. Improving attendance – WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES:

1. Mark the registers in accordance with the law twice a day.
2. Informs any parents / carers who have not contacted school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
3. Maintains records and monitors attendance of pupils on a regular basis.
4. Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only school can authorise absence.
5. Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and / or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.
6. Provides access to staff with whom attendance related issues can be discussed.
7. Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the pupil / family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
8. Provides re – integration support for pupils returning from absence.
9. Uses the schools reward systems to encourage pupils to arrive on time for school.
10. Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards and tracking pupils.
11. Works with relevant external agencies if a pupils' attendance becomes a concern, i.e. – Social Care, Forward Thinking, Pupil Support Service, Police, and YOT.
12. Uses Fast Track as a means of working with parents to resolve issues affecting attendance.

26. Key Attendance staff in school:

Head Teacher – Mr McGarvey

Deputy Headteacher/DSL – Miss Haines

Assistant Headteacher/Deputy DSL – Mr Lynch

Head of Year – Mr Robinson

Head of Year/Deputy DSL - Miss Duckworth

Head of Year/Deputy DSL – Mrs Crawford

Attendance Manager/Deputy DSL – Mrs Nolan

Deputy DSL – Mr Wills

SENCO – Miss Turner

Receptionist – Miss Evans and Mrs Fotheringhame

27. Links to Other Policies

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

The school has a legal responsibility to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly. Our staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Your continued support in this matter is essential. Please work with us.



Appendix I

Attendance Contract/Action Plan

Date Time of meeting:	
Pupil name	
Date of birth	
Address	

Present at meeting	
Actions Agreed	
Attendance target:	
Timescale for improvement:	
Date for review meeting:	
I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present	
Parent signature	
Pupil Signature	
School representative	
School Governor	