BOWES COTHERSTONE FEDERATION

BOWES HUTCHINSON'S C OF E VA SCHOOL

COTHERSTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL

BELIEVE, ASPIRE, THRIVE, TOGETHER

POLICY DOCUMENT

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date Revised: September 2024

Date for Review: September 2025

Signed: _____

Headteacher

Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Mrs J Gibson	Head Teacher and Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance	j.gibson@bcfederation.uk
Miss S Harrison	Deputy Head Teacher, DSL and SENCo (Bowes)	s.harrison@bcfederation.uk
Mr R Batchelor	Deputy Head Teacher, DSL and SENCo (Cotherstone)	r.batchelor@bcfederation.uk
Mrs R Gedye	Secretary (Bowes)	r.gedye@bcfederation.uk
Mrs A Sabey	Secretary (Cotherstone)	a.sowerby@bcfederation.uk

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is: Mrs Gedye or Mrs Sabey.

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs J Gibson	Head Teacher	j.gibson@bcfederation.uk
Miss S Harrison	Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance (Bowes)	s.harrison@bcfederation.uk
Mr R Batchelor	Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance (Cotherstone)	r.batchelor@bcfederation.uk

Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Children Missing from Education

If pupils' whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treat as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

The Bowes Cotherstone Federation seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the Working Together to improve school attendance statutory guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day

The school day is from 8:50am – 3:20pm. Pupils can arrive from 8:40am through the main gate onto the yard. When the bell rings, children need to line up on the yard and filter quietly into school.

Registration is 8:50-9:05am. The register will close at 9:30am. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed (between 9:05am and 9:30am) will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance, the registers will close at 9:30am.

Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact Mrs. Gibson, Miss. Harrison or Mr. Batchelor if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:
All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on our register.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions
If a pupil is late on several occasions, Mrs. Gibson will contact parents to discuss how we can support families and work together to improve punctuality.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality
Through working collaboratively, further support, such as: attendance at breakfast club; use of the well-being room on arrival; 1:1 work with a key adult on arrival or a personalised welcome offer on arrival, e.g. going into school to complete an activity could be discussed. It is important to note that this will be bespoke to the child and their needs.

Term dates and planned Inset days
Details of term dates and professional development days are available on each school's website.

Leave of Absence in Term Time
Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. There is discretion to consider

exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing the form.
Leave of Absence forms are available on the school websites or via request at the school office.

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. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

If a child is absent, please telephone or email the school office to explain the reason.

On the first day of absence
If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to contact the School office, either in person, via telephone or email, providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home to find out why the pupil not in school.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

Periods of extended absence
If a child is absent due to a specific illness, NHS guidance will be followed regarding how long children need to be absent for.
If it is due to another reason, the frequency of contact will be arranged via the school office or Head teacher if it is more complex case.

No reason for absence provided
If no reason has been provided for the absence, contact will be made with other emergency contacts in an effort to establish the reason for absence. If this is

unsuccessful, a home visit would be undertaken to ensure that there are no welfare or safeguarding risks.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences (equivalent to 5 school days) are recorded in any 10 school week period, the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parents provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

At Bowes Cotherstone Federation, we support and promote good attendance and punctuality by:

- Submitting a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Building strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Giving parents / carers details on attendance in our weekly newsletters;
- Promoting the benefits of high attendance to pupils by discussing this in each week's celebration assembly alongside sharing each class' attendance figures and awarding an attendance trophy to the class with the highest attendance for that week;
- Awarding 100% attendance certificates to individuals on a half-termly basis;
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences.

Attendance data

We will analyse and use attendance data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We may communicate information to other professionals such as early help, TAF, TAS etc. if additional advice and support is required.

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent.
We will work closely with pupils and their families to agree support to help improve attendance.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent.
We will continue to work closely with pupils and their families to produce a support plan to help improve attendance. We will meet regularly to discuss progress and any adaptations. In some cases, wider support services, such as SEND support and advice, may be consulted. If the absence is due to a longer-term illness, the Education Health and Needs Team can support.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. (DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct)

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. (DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet)

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence.

If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or

face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

Pupils with specific needs

This Policy will be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance.

This policy has been developed with and will be implemented in-line with the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

Safeguarding, Anti-bullying and SEND.

APPENDIX 1

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Expect

We all want the best for pupils and therefore aspire to have the highest attendance possible for each individual to allow them to access the education on offer to them in a culture they feel safe, part of the community and where they want to be.

Monitor

Data will be used to monitor, identify and support attendance to enable school to address concerns at the earliest opportunity using a support first approach.

Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

We appreciate and understand that attendance is everyone's responsibility and led by the Mrs Gibson, the Senior Attendance Champion from the school leadership team.

The Senior Leadership Team, consisting of Mrs Gibson, Miss Harrison and Mr Batchelor, are available in school to listen to any concerns which may be affecting attendance. Class teachers or senior leaders will communicate with parents where concerns are identified by school.

Facilitate support

We will always endeavour to work closely with pupils and their families to identify barriers to attending school and access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school and that this might include an early help or whole family plan where there are wider issues affecting attendance.

The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, involves access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Formalise support

If absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.

Enforce

When all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil’s right to an education.