



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2021 – 2022

<b>Policy Reviewed:</b>	September 2021
<b>Next Review:</b>	<i>September 2022</i>

## Mission Statement

*At Red Lane we believe that all our children can achieve, becoming successful future citizens that contribute positively to a society in which all members are equally valued.*

*High aspirations, high motivation and high outcomes for all, ensure that achievement gaps wherever they exist are narrowed in order to improve pupils' life choices and future prospects.*

*We strive for all of our children to be safe, feel valued, develop resilience and continually learn within our nurturing and supportive community.*

*At Red Lane, our children BELIEVE, ACHIEVE and SUCCEED!*

At Red Lane, we believe that high attendance is fundamental to academic and social success of all pupils. Regular school attendance is important so that pupils can:

- Work co-operatively with others
- Develop their academic knowledge and skills and build on these each day
- Gain skills and knowledge and the confidence to apply them to new situations in order that they can take full advantage of the life chances available to them
- Improve their understanding of the world around them
- Widen their experiences beyond their immediate area
- Become confident and successful adults who make a positive contribution to society

Systematic procedures are in place in order to:

- Maximise attendance rates by encouraging, recognising and rewarding good attendance and to ensure that attendance at school is viewed positively.
- Investigate individual absences and ensure that pupils and parents are clear that unauthorised absences are not acceptable.
- Work closely with pupils and parents, to help them overcome problems, which may prevent pupils from attending regularly.
- Provide parents with support and advice in order to maintain and improve attendance.
- Recognise and celebrate improvements in attendance and punctuality of individuals and families.

The policy and procedures are underpinned by the following guidelines and principles:

- Children should attend school punctually every day
- Pupils should only be absent if the reason is “unavoidable”
- Authorised absences are when a pupil is away from school for a good reason – illness or unavoidable causes
- Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider acceptable and for which no “leave” has been given. Every half-day session of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised
- Reasons for absence are always required
- Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason is avoidable. This includes keeping children off school for trivial reasons; shopping, hairdresser's appointments, minding younger children, birthdays' or for a treat.
- The school retains the right to classify absence as authorised or unauthorised
- The authorisation of any absence is at the Head of School's discretion. If the legitimacy of the absence due to illness is in doubt, the school reserves the right not to authorise the absence and to consult with outside agencies concerning seeking medical advice.

- Poor attendance will not be tolerated. The school will pursue all avenues both formal and informal to ensure that children are assured of their right to attend school including the administration of penalty notices.
- Where a reasonable reason for absence is not given or where one cannot be attained despite reasonable attempts by the school absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a penalty notice. Parents are made aware of this at the start of the academic year and where any concerns are raised.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

“Children and young people with mental health problems are more likely to miss school – this can be for a variety of reasons. But research has shown a clear link between school absence and academic attainment. Children and young people who regularly miss school may also feel more socially isolated as a result.” ([Absenteeism : Mentally Healthy Schools](#))

As part of our commitment to promoting the positive mental health and wellbeing for our pupils, we seek to promote positive attendance patterns in a number of ways.

### **Daily procedure**

Each morning class registers are completed by the teachers using SIMS and are saved before classes go to assembly. By 9.30am all registers are checked by the Attendance officer and the process of checking absences may commence. The class teacher will update the in class laminated register for use in fire and invacutaion. Where children arrive just after the register closes (up until 9.30am), the class teacher will update the register accordingly. Throughout the day, any amendments to the register are made to the laminated copy so that these are, up to date at all times.

Classteachers receive regular updates and training on the completion of registers. The following codes are used to complete the online register:

### **Absence and Attendance Codes**

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

The codes are:

#### Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

#### Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

**Code B: Off-site educational activity-** This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

**Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment** This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

**Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment** This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

**Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity** This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

**Code V: Educational visit or trip** This code should 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.

Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code. 'Authorised Absence from School Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

**Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school** Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

**Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made** If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should 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 I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)** Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes. 13

**Code M: Medical or dental appointments** Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents 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 R: Religious observance** Schools must 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, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

**Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence** A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

**Unauthorised Absence from School** Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence codes are as follows:

**Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.** If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided** Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

**Code O: Absent from school without authorisation** If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed** Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent

## **Absence and Punctuality**

### **Illness and other legitimate reasons**

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact school as soon as possible, in person, by telephone, class dojo or by letter. Verbal messages from other brothers or sisters or friends will not be accepted.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency or for medical appointments, which are unavoidable in school time. Appointment cards may be requested in order to authorise medical appointments.

### **Holidays**

Amendments to the 2006 Education act, has removed a Headteacher's ability to authorise term-time holidays. Holidays will **not** be authorised within term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where holidays are taken without authorisation they will be recorded as unauthorised absences. From 1st September 2018, the Local Authority have changed the criteria for issuing a penalty notice for unauthorised absences. BASE Academy follow this guidance. Where a pupil has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence within two consecutive half terms, a fine may be issued (consideration will be given to the pupil's attendance in previous years and also their current attendance).

### **Lateness**

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. will be marked as late in the register (L). Children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as unauthorised late in the register (U).

## **Celebrating Attendance and Punctuality**

At Red Lane we believe that it is important to recognise and celebrate good attendance. In addition to this and as recognition of the hard work of parents we also recognise improvements in attendance. The Attendance Officer recognises and rewards improvements in attendance and punctuality of families she is working with. This may be through stickers, post cards home or discussions with parents.

Each week attendance and punctuality is celebrated in assembly and within KS1, LKS2 and UKS2 there is a weekly award for class attendance and punctuality. Where classes achieve the school target of 96%, they receive an extra break time. This is communicated to the parents via text each Friday.

Each week, any child who is on time and in school each day will have their names entered into a raffle. This raffle will be built up over the half term and on the last day will be drawn. After pupil consultation, it was decided that prizes would be received in year groups.

## **Communicating with Parents**

At the start of each year and when any new child starts school, parents are given an attendance information, leaflet which outlines the school policy and procedures with regards to attendance. Parents are informed of weekly class awards via text message. The school's attendance policy is published on the school website.

Parents are informed termly via the termly reports and parent conferences about their child's attendance. Where there are concerns regarding attendance and punctuality, parents are informed of this via the Attendance Officer.

In September the attendance officer will contact parents of pupils who had attendance below 95% in the previous academic year to inform them of their child's attendance in the past academic year and to advise them as to what is expected and to let them know we will be monitoring their child's attendance and we expect it to improve.

## **Monitoring Arrangements**

### **Procedures for Monitoring Attendance**

The attendance of pupils on the child protection register is monitored daily. Where a pupil is absent the Attendance Officer contacts the Early Intervention Team, who will carry out a home visit. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be informed and the information added to CPOMS.

Each day the Attendance Officer runs an absence report.

Where no reason for absence has been given the Attendance Officer will send a text to parents asking them to give a reason for the absence, if the parent has not contacted the school by later in the day, a phone call to parent will be made requesting a reason and reiterating the procedures for informing school of absence. If parent can still not be contacted the mark will remain unauthorised unless a legitimate reason is given on the child's return to school. At this point, the Attendance Officer will ask that the Class Teacher send a class dojo message to ascertain a reason for absence and check on the child's wellbeing.

If the child has been absent for more than 2 days without parent contact or where there are other concerns, then a home visit may be carried out where the child(ren) have been identified as either a persistent absence or on the school monitor list.

It is expected that parents will contact school on day one, three and five of any absence. Where subsequent (day 3 and 5) absent is not informed, a decision as to whether to continue to authorise will be based on the nature of illness and the pupils' prior attendance record. If a reason is later given, this may then be amended.

The following procedures are in place for persistent absence.

In September, a report is generated identifying pupils who have had less than 95% attendance during the course of the previous year. These children are closely monitored over the next academic year.

1. At the end of each month the Attendance Officer runs an attendance report which identifies pupils whose attendance is concern.
2. When a pupils absence reaches 15 sessions (7 and a ½ days) parents are contacted by the class teacher, informed and notified that their attendance will be monitored. This communication will be recorded on CPOMS. (Unless 5 unauthorised sessions are recorded on the register within a term or two consecutive half terms, then the Penalty Notice Procedure will be followed).
3. If absence reaches 20 sessions (10 days) parents are again contacted by the School Attendance Officer to discuss any ways that school can support parents via the Early Help process. This will be recorded on CPOMS. These cases will be discussed at the school's Inclusion Team meetings which are held fortnightly. (If 5 unauthorised sessions are recorded on the register within two consecutive half terms, then the Penalty Notice Procedure will be followed).
4. Where there are still concerns regarding attendance, these will be referred to the Head of School and next steps such as home visits or a meeting with the Head of School, Attendance Officer and parents are arranged.
5. If a child has regular absence through a medical condition and/or regular illness, then clarification should be sort in the form of a Doctor's letter. If a parent is reluctant to share medical information, then the school nurse should be contacted. They may then be able to conduct a health check on the child and offer support to the family.
6. If there is no improvement in attendance or a lack of parental engagement, then further absence will be not necessarily be authorized by the school. This may lead to the Penalty Notice Procedure being followed,

### **Penalty Notice Procedures**

From 1st September 2018, the Local Authority have changed the criteria for issuing a penalty notice for unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences occur where there is no reason is given for absence, your child is absent for an unauthorised holiday, the reason given is not considered

acceptable to authorise absence or they arrived late after 9.30am. BASE Academy follow this guidance. Where a pupil has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence a penalty notice may be requested (Appendix 1)

Once a pupil has reached 5 unauthorised sessions of absence (including late after 9.30am), school can issue a Warning Notice. A warning notice is not required when a child is absent due to an unauthorised holiday.

Following the warning, if a further 5 sessions or more of unauthorised absence occur (a total of 10 over two consecutive half terms) a Penalty Notice can then be requested. Where a child is absent for an unauthorised holiday of more than 10 sessions, a Penalty Notice can be requested on their return to school.

A Penalty Notice can be requested for each parent.

*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 Act (1989) for a child or young person.

Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days and increased to £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority must consider the commencement of legal proceedings for the offence to which the notice relates. The prosecution is not for the non-payment of the penalty notice but is for failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

Whilst these are Bolton guidelines, at Red Lane we have adjusted these thresholds in order to allow the school to work with parents to improve attendance.

#### Procedures for Monitoring Punctuality and Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. will be marked as late in the register (L). Children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as unauthorised late in the register (U).

1. Classes will enter the school at 8:40. If a pupil arrives after the pupils have entered school but before 9am, they will enter through the usual door. Until 9:00am the children can still enter through the school doors where a prefect will then mark them in a door book. The reason that they still enter through their usual door and not the office is to reduce the number of people in Reception at this time and to ensure that we have accurate records of who has arrived at school for register updating purposes. Class teachers update registers until this time.
2. When a child arrives late after 9am, parents and pupils should enter through the office. At this time pupils will receive an 'L' on the electronic register. This is entered by either the office or Attendance Officer with the time that the pupil arrived.
3. This will apply until 9:30 when any child arriving will be marked as 'U'. (Which is an unauthorised session).
4. The Attendance Officer records all incidences of lateness each day. Initial contact will be made via class teachers to discuss this. Punctuality will then be monitored.
5. If lateness continues or there have been a number of late marks throughout the half term parents will be contacted by the School Attendance Officer.
6. Where there are still concerns regarding punctuality, these will be referred to the Head of School and next steps such as home visits or a meeting with the Head of School, Attendance Officer and parents are arranged.

If a pupil is late being collected from school they are taken to the office after 10 minutes of lateness where they will need to be collected by parent/carer. They will also be entered into the 'late collection book' by the Attendance Officer, who will speak to parents upon collection. If is a recurring issue, the Attendance Officer will also contact parents to discuss this and offer any further support. Names of



these families will be discussed at the regular attendance and inclusion team meetings. After 3.45pm the pupil may be placed in after school club and the parent charged for this facility.

### Reporting

Each half term the Attendance Officer compiles a report on attendance and punctuality and presents this to the Head of School and/or SLT. This includes information about attendance and punctuality across the school, in classes and for individuals. It also details actions taken by the attendance officer in order to improve attendance and punctuality of groups of pupils and individuals. As part of the school monitoring and reporting the attendance and punctuality of Ever 6 pupils and SEN pupils is closely scrutinised and reported on. The Local Governing Board also receives a termly report.

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Parents must contact school by 9.30am on the first day of absence. Parents should then make contact on day 3, day 5 and so on.

When your child's absence reaches 15 sessions (7 and a ½ days) you will be contacted and your child's attendance will be monitored.

If absence reaches 20 sessions (10 days) you will be contacted by the School Attendance Officer to discuss any ways that school can support parents.

Where there are still concerns regarding attendance, these will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team.

## UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

If no reason is given for absence, your child is absent for an unauthorised holiday, the reason given is not considered acceptable to authorise absence or they arrived late after 9.30am then your child will be given an unauthorised mark

If a child reaches 10 unauthorised sessions in a term or 2 consecutive half terms a penalty notice warning may be sent. Unless it is an unauthorised holiday then a warning is not required.

If a further 4 sessions unauthorised absence are recorded (14 sessions in total in a term or 2 consecutive half terms) then a penalty notice may be requested. One for each parent.

## LATENESS PROCEDURES

As part of safeguarding children, if a child arrives after 9am parents must accompany them to the school office.

If a child is late twice in a week the class teacher may discuss this with you and punctuality will be monitored.

If lateness continues or there have been a number of late marks throughout the half term you will be contacted by the School Attendance Officer.

Where there are still concerns regarding punctuality, these will be referred to the Head of School

Please note that where school is not contacted about an absence or a valid reason is not provided this may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised which can result in a fine.



# RED LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Executive Headteacher: Mrs L Whittaker

Head of School: Mrs R Driver

*“Red Lane Primary is a good school with outstanding features”  
(Ofsted-March 2014)*

Dear Parent / Guardian

We are writing to notify you about an important change in Bolton’s code of conduct regarding penalty notice fines for irregular attendance at school.

**From 1st September 2018, the criteria for issuing a penalty notice will be reduced and a fine will be considered where a pupil has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms.**

This change has been introduced because of:

- \* Requests from Head Teachers to strengthen sanctions for unnecessary absence from school
- \* Increasing numbers of pupils who are classed as persistently absent
- \* An increase in the amount of absence due to family holidays in term time

The borough’s schools and Bolton Council want all pupils to achieve the best possible results and there is a strong link between regular school attendance and attainment.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure their child’s regular attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the Head Teacher.

The vast majority of pupils in Bolton have an excellent attendance record and we recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly and make the most of their educational opportunities.

The School and Bolton Council will continue to work closely together to ensure our children can achieve the best possible outcomes.

Should you have any concerns about your child’s attendance or are experiencing difficulties, please contact the school and ask for help.

More information about penalty notices can be found on Bolton Council’s website:  
<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Truancy.aspx>

Interim Director of People

Bolton Council

Red Lane School

Lisa Whittaker Executive Headteacher

[School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Additional health needs guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)