



Attendance Policy

Policy title:	Attendance Policy
Function:	For information and guidance about attendance at The Blue Coat School. This document forms part of the portfolio of policies designed to inform students and parents.
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1. The Blue Coat Aims and objectives

At the Blue Coat School our vision is simple. All that we do is focused on developing exceptionally well-rounded individuals with the skills to thrive and positively contribute in a rapidly changing society.

This is underpinned by our unrelenting focus on:

Inspiring excellence

Excellence is not something that is simply achieved. It is something that we always strive for so that we can continually create opportunity and enhance the life chances of talented young people from broad and diverse backgrounds. The best is not, however, always the easiest. Our staff and learners will be resilient, and able to overcome barriers and challenges to ensure that potential is unlocked.

Shaping character

Our learners leave us not just knowing how to do things, but how to do things in the right way for the right reasons. That is why humility and integrity are the key pillars of our community, and the basis for how we treat one another. They ensure we have a culture where individuals are treated with care and compassionate respectfulness.

Forging futures

Every member of our community will leave us embracing their strengths and with ambition and aspiration as to how they can contribute positively to the modern world they are entering. Our students will become the leaders of tomorrow.

By extension, our values, approach and ethos are embodied in, and implemented through, our policies and procedures. They are the framework to support all that we do and achieve.

2. Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Students need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. The Blue Coat School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure students are in school and on time, therefore, having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our Policy applies to all children registered at this school and this Policy is made available on our school website to all parents/carers of students who are registered at our school.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improveschool-attendance>

Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that students succeed whilst at school
- ensure that students have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher, staff and Trustees at our school are committed to:

- Building strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- Working closely with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all students are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

*Definition of parent: Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 - A parent in relation to any child or young person, includes any person: -

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for a child; or
- who has care of a child i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

This also includes all parents who are absent. Parental partners can be included whether they are married or the natural parent of the child as they have 'care' of the child. If a child lives with a grandparent or older sibling as their main carer, they can also be included as they are the main care provider. It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the student, that parent is still responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day.

At The Blue Coat School, we understand the law requires:

- Our school to have an admission register and an attendance register.
- Our Trustees to have regard to the statutory guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)'.
- Our School to put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school.
- Our school to notify the Local Authority (LA) when a student's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

- Our to inform the LA of any student who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school’s permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

3. Principles of The Blue Coat School Attendance Policy

The Trust Board of The Blue Coat School places a high priority on achieving standards and feel that excellent student attendance and punctuality are essential. They undertake this role by:

- Nominate a named Trustee for Attendance.
- Monitoring what strategies the school has put into place to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence and take appropriate action should attendance levels impact significantly on attainment.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the students who need it.
- Regularly report on attendance to Trustees, including key groups of students
- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

In order for children to achieve their potential, students must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school. Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Trustees and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 97% attendance throughout the school.

The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%).
- Ensure every student has access to a suitable education, to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

This table illustrates the impact of attendance that is 95% or below

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38days	8 weeks	200 lessons

4. 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 duty on parents is to ensure that their children are educated, either at school or 'otherwise'. Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of 'otherwise', children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, ie – FE colleges from the age of 14, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and 'suitable' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

Schools must enter students on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. For most students, the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

5. Daily Procedures

Under the 2006 Education Regulations, the school is legally required to register students twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 8:45am and 9:05am and in the afternoon at 1:30pm. It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.

School starts at 8:40am when all students should be in their form room, 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. Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill. Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the website which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school.

6. Absence From School

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. The school requires at least three emergency contact numbers. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. Parents are encouraged contact the school with reasons for absence as soon as possible including their estimated return date.

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 has the right to request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell. This may include: a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, slip with date, student's name and

surgery stamp, signed by GP Receptionist, 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. This also applies to any extended absences of more than 3 school days. The school may not authorise medical/illness absence without this evidence.

Parents 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.

The school **may** authorise absence under certain specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the school 7 working days in advance to secure authorisation. This **may** include work and/or further education related interviews and meetings with external agencies. The school **may** also authorise events where students are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

7. Children with a Social Worker – First Day Response

If children who have a social worker are absent from school, we will contact the Local Authority. We may request a home visit as part of the first day response. We will also contact the child's social worker and the Virtual School where appropriate.

8. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. Students with attendance below 90% fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category.

When a student's attendance falls below 95% or punctuality is a concern (at any stage of the year) we will:

- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with your child's Achievement & Progress Leader and/or the Assistant Headteacher if absences persist
- Create a personalised/support/action plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Set a target with timescales to secure improvement in attendance
- Offer support by sign posting to other agencies or services if appropriate. This may involve undertaking an early help assessment.
- Consider any interventions that have worked previously to bring about improvements in attendance.
- Consider any school age siblings in our school or other schools and work in partnership to deliver a joint approach
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

If parents in our school fail to comply with the support plan and there is no improvement in their child's attendance a referral may be made to the Local Authority requesting legal intervention through the issuing of a penalty notice or further action.

9. Reluctance to go to School

Sometimes students 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 any 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 Student Support Team. We would always urge parents to take them to school to discuss the issues and seek a prompt reintegration.

10. Leave of Absence in Term Time

The school may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. They 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 Headteacher's discretion.** Under DFE guidelines the school 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 for a Penalty Charge Notice Fine to be issued by the Local Authority. Penalty notice fines are from £120 to £160 per child, per parent, however the amount will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. The £80 Penalty Charge Notice will need to be paid in full separately by both parents within 21 days and will rise to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Charge Notice is not paid within 28 days, parents can be prosecuted under section 444, the Education Act 1996.

A penalty notice may also be issued, after consideration of all the information, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold or repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. This is a discretionary power that is included with the code. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the penalty notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160. There is no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

The Government has set a national limit of two penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period. If the national limit of two penalty notices has been met, or exceeded, the local authority must consider the use of another tool to improve attendance. For example, prosecution or another attendance legal intervention.

Children attending Liverpool schools, including The Blue Coat School, are not allowed absence for holidays. Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as Unauthorised, (G) – Family holiday not agreed or (O) Unauthorised absence.

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 student is potentially at-risk while being taken out of school during term time.

The school will seek advice from the Local Authority if a student fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and the school have made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the student or their family. This applies to leave of absence that are both authorised and unauthorised by the school. As a result, school will invoke CME procedures. The school may remove the student from roll under such circumstances, in consultation with the Local Authority.

11. Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Such circumstances may include:

- A student not attending school to go shopping.
- A student not attending school as it is their birthday or the birthday of a family member.
- A student not attending school as the family have gone to the airport to meet a visiting relative.
- A student not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member.
- A student not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday.
- A student not attending school as they are looking for after younger siblings.
- A student attends a medical or other appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons.

Our school will always try to bring about an improvement in attendance through a support plan, however, we may request penalty charge notices to address unauthorised absence.

A parent may be issued with a penalty notice if their child's absence is unauthorised, and they miss 10 sessions within a rolling period of 10 weeks. Ten sessions are usually the same as 5 school days. The 10 weeks may span different terms or school years. For example, two unauthorised absences in the summer term and eight unauthorised absences in the autumn term.

The Local Authority will:

- Issue a formal written warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued.
- In the same letter, set a period of 20 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- Issue a penalty charge notice through the post at the end of the 20-day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

12. Punctuality

As you may be aware, the law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if late arrival is not resolved.

Poor punctuality can lead to your child:

- Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends.
- Missing the beginning of vital lessons.
- Missing important instructions for the rest of the school day.
- Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equal days' worth of teaching lost in a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

Late Procedures

Children, who arrive late should go to the office entrance, must sign in with a reason for the lateness. The admin staff will:

- update the SIMS system with their mark.
- Children who frequently arrive late will be monitored; parents will be contacted and a referral to the Assistant Headteacher teacher will be considered.
- Children who arrive late after the registers have closed will receive a U code, indicating that they are late and arrived after the register closed

Students who arrive late will automatically be issued a 30 minute lunchtime detention

Children who must leave for any reason throughout the day should be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. This is strongly discouraged. Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.

13. Roles and Responsibilities AND RESPONSIBILITIES

IMPROVING ATTENDANCE – WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:

- Provide AT LEAST three emergency contact numbers to the school.
- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child must be unexpectedly absent (e.g., sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible. 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 he/she can complete most of their timetable before leaving.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barrier to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school, ensuring they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's Edulink can help you to do this.
- 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.
- Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances, please contact the Head teacher and a decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
- Talk positively about going to school.
- 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.
- Contact school before the concerns escalate.

IMPROVING ATTENDANCE – WHAT SCHOOL DOES:

- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, students and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Support for students with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with students and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the student's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at Trust Board meetings.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.
- Marks the registers in accordance with the law twice a day.
- Informs any parents/carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
- Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.
- Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only the school can authorise absence.
- Contacts parents/carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and/or when patterns of absence are causing concerns.
- Undertake Early Help Assessment where it is deemed appropriate.
- Proactively use data to identify students at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified student and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners.
- Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the student/family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
- Provide re – integration support for students returning from absence.
- Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
- Inform parents of individual pupil's attendance record each term at Parents' Evening.
- Works with relevant external agencies if a students' attendance becomes a concern, ie – Social Care, Early Help Services, Police, YOT, SEND.
- Make referrals to the School Nurse team where appropriate to seek advice to support the pupil.
- Works in partnership with the Local Authority to improve school attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism sometimes utilising legal interventions.
- Campaign as a means of working with parents to resolve issues affecting levels of attendance
- Continued support as for students at risk of becoming persistently absent and:

- Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.

IMPROVING ATTENDANCE - ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

- Work with our school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for students who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.
- Work jointly with our school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.
- Ensure improving school attendance and reducing persistent absence is a priority in all multi agency plans including child protection, child in need, cared for children (LAC) and Early Help.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).
- Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.
- Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.
- Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.
- Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker.
- Attendance to be a priority in personal education plans for looked-after children.
- Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting students previously looked after.

14. Communication with Parents

- Update parents when their child's attendance drops below 97%
- Report to parents at least three times a year in reports on their child's attendance.

15. Rewards and Incentives

- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward individuals and group good or improving attendance

16. School Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Notifying the Local Authority

Our school notify the Local Authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The school (regardless of designation) must also notify the Local Authority of any student who is to be deleted from the admission register. Our school will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered 'missing'.

Where a child leaves our school without a destination, or another school is not identified our school follow Liverpool City Council Children Missing Education Procedures

17. Attendance Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of students when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent students are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment. The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

18. Absence Codes

According to DfE guidance the following codes are used for authorised absence on the register.

A	Present at registration
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
F	Agreed extended family holiday family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late but arrived before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason for the absence provided yet
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not work based training)
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to all pupils