

Lever Edge Primary Academy



Attendance Policy

Every lesson counts.

Improving attendance, raising attainment

Reviewed Autumn 2026



1. Mission Statement

At Lever Edge Primary Academy, we believe that excellent attendance is fundamental to ensuring every child achieves their full potential academically, socially and emotionally.

We are committed to creating a culture in which attendance is valued by pupils, staff, parents and carers. We recognise that attending school regularly supports wellbeing, fosters positive relationships and improves outcomes for children. We work in partnership with families and external agencies to identify and remove barriers to attendance and ensure that every pupil can access the education to which they are entitled.

Attendance is everybody's responsibility. Lever Edge Primary Academy is committed to a support-first approach which identifies and removes barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity. We recognise that good attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, wellbeing, achievement and life chances, and we work in partnership with families and external agencies to ensure every child has the opportunity to attend, belong and achieve.

2. Aims

This policy demonstrates the academy's commitment to meeting its obligations under the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)* and promoting a whole-school culture where attendance is everyone's responsibility.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote excellent attendance and punctuality for all pupils.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Foster a culture where attendance is recognised as a key factor in achievement, wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Identify barriers to attendance at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Work collaboratively with pupils, parents, carers and external agencies to remove barriers to attendance.
- Reduce levels of absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Provide timely support and intervention where attendance concerns arise.
- Ensure attendance procedures are fair, consistent and in line with statutory requirements.
- Fulfil safeguarding responsibilities in relation to attendance and absence.
- Promote a support-first approach, using legal intervention only when necessary and appropriate.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2026)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental Health Issues Affecting a Pupil's Attendance: Guidance for Schools
- Children Missing Education Guidance
- Bolton Local Authority Attendance Procedures and Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices

The school will review this policy annually to ensure continuing compliance with statutory guidance.

4. Principles of Good Attendance

At Lever Edge Primary Academy we believe:

- Every day in school matters.
- Good attendance is closely linked to achievement and wellbeing.
- Attendance is everyone's responsibility.
- Barriers to attendance should be identified and addressed early.
- Children should feel safe, welcomed and valued in school.

- Attendance concerns should be addressed through supportive and collaborative approaches.
- Legal intervention should only be used where supportive strategies have been exhausted or where legislation requires it.

We recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider issues. Our response will therefore focus on understanding and addressing barriers rather than simply enforcing attendance.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trustee Board

The Trustee Board will:

- Promote the importance of school attendance across all school policies.
- Monitor attendance performance and trends.
- Hold leaders to account for attendance outcomes.
- Ensure sufficient resources are allocated to attendance support.
- Review attendance data and challenge leaders where attendance is not improving.
- Ensure statutory duties relating to attendance are met.
- Support the school in developing a positive attendance culture.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher (Ms Kelly James) has overall responsibility for attendance and will:

- Lead the strategic approach to attendance.
- Ensure implementation of this policy.
- Promote a whole-school culture of excellent attendance.
- Monitor attendance and absence trends.
- Ensure effective support is available to pupils and families.
- Work with the Local Authority and partner agencies.
- Authorise leave requests where appropriate.
- Ensure attendance procedures comply with statutory guidance.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns linked to attendance are identified and addressed promptly.

Senior Attendance Champion

The school's Senior Attendance Champion is: **Ms Kelly James** Headteacher Email: head@lever-edge.bolton.sch.uk

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Champion attendance across the school.
- Lead attendance improvement strategies.
- Monitor persistent and severe absence.
- Analyse attendance data and identify trends.
- Coordinate attendance interventions.
- Liaise with families and external agencies.
- Support staff in implementing attendance procedures.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of attendance provision.
- Report attendance information to trustees.

Attendance Team

The Attendance Team consists of:

- Mrs Kelly James
- Mrs Yasmin Walker
- Mrs Melanie Tipping

The Attendance Team will:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality daily.
- Investigate attendance concerns.

- Meet with families where attendance concerns arise.
- Coordinate attendance support plans.
- Make referrals to external agencies when required.
- Maintain accurate attendance records.
- Monitor attendance of vulnerable pupils.
- Support pupils returning from prolonged absence.

Teaching and Support Staff

All staff share responsibility for attendance and will:

- Promote positive attendance through classroom practice.
- Record attendance accurately and promptly.
- Raise concerns regarding attendance patterns.
- Develop positive relationships with pupils and families.
- Identify and report barriers affecting attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance and improvements in attendance.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day whenever possible.
- Inform school on the first day of absence.
- Provide reasons for absence.
- Engage positively with attendance support plans.
- Attend meetings arranged to support attendance.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- Ensure medical appointments are arranged outside school hours wherever possible.
- Work collaboratively with school staff to address attendance concerns.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day unless genuinely unable to do so.
- Arrive punctually.
- Engage positively in learning.
- Speak to trusted adults if they are experiencing difficulties affecting attendance.

6. Promoting Good Attendance

At Lever Edge Primary Academy, attendance is actively promoted through:

- Regular communication with families.
- Attendance assemblies.
- Celebration of good and improved attendance.
- Class attendance recognition.
- Positive relationships with pupils and families.
- High-quality teaching and learning experiences.
- A safe, inclusive and welcoming school environment.

The school recognises and celebrates improved attendance as well as high attendance.

Attendance support is prioritised over punitive measures, particularly where attendance barriers are identified.

7. Attendance and Safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding matter.

Poor attendance may be an indicator of:

- Neglect
- Emotional wellbeing concerns
- Mental health difficulties
- Child exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Family difficulties
- Unmet SEND needs

The school will work closely with safeguarding professionals to identify and respond to attendance concerns where welfare issues are suspected. Attendance concerns will always be considered alongside wider safeguarding information.

8. Attendance and Vulnerable Pupils

The school recognises that some pupils face additional barriers to attendance.

Particular attention will be given to:

- Pupils with SEND.
- Children with Education Health and Care Plans.
- Children looked after.
- Previously looked after children.
- Children in Need.
- Children subject to Child Protection Plans.
- Young carers.
- Pupils supported through Early Help.
- Pupils experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Pupils with a social worker.

Support will be individualised and developed in partnership with families and relevant professionals.

Attendance concerns for vulnerable pupils will be reviewed regularly through safeguarding and pastoral systems.

9. Attendance Registers and Recording Attendance

The academy maintains an attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

All pupils will be placed on the admission register and attendance register.

Attendance will be recorded twice daily:

- At the start of the morning session.
- At the start of the afternoon session.

The school will:

- Record attendance using the appropriate DfE attendance codes.
- Maintain registers electronically through the school's Management Information System.
- Retain attendance records for the statutory period.
- Ensure attendance data is accurate, timely and regularly monitored.

Pupils are expected to arrive in school by **8.30am**.

The morning register will close at **8.45am**.

10. First Day Response and Safeguarding Procedures

The school operates robust first-day absence procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.

Where a pupil is absent and no reason has been received:

Day 1

The school will:

- Contact parents/carers by telephone.
- Contact additional emergency contacts where necessary.
- Record all contact attempts.
- Consider safeguarding concerns.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.

Ongoing Absence

Where contact cannot be established or concerns arise, the school may:

- Conduct a home visit.
- Request support from external agencies.
- Make a Children Missing Education referral.
- Consult Children's Social Care where safeguarding concerns exist.

For children with a social worker, the school will notify the social worker of unexplained absence as soon as practicable.

Attendance concerns will always be considered alongside safeguarding information.

11. Punctuality and Late Arrival

Punctual attendance is essential to ensure children access the full curriculum and begin each day positively.

Arrival Before Register Closes

Pupils arriving between 8.30am and 8.45am will receive the late code (L).

Arrival After Register Closes

Pupils arriving after 8.45am will receive the unauthorised late code (U) unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Where lateness becomes a concern, the school will:

- Speak with parents/carers.
- Explore barriers contributing to lateness.
- Introduce appropriate support measures.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality closely.

Repeated lateness may be considered within the school's attendance support process.

12. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence.

Parents cannot authorise absence themselves.

Each request for absence will be considered individually and recorded using the appropriate DfE attendance code.

Examples of Authorised Absence

Authorised absences may include:

- Genuine illness.
- Medical or dental appointments.
- Religious observance.
- Exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher.
- Approved educational activities.
- Circumstances outlined within statutory guidance.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Term-time holidays not approved by the Headteacher.
- Shopping trips.
- Birthdays and celebrations.
- Looking after siblings.
- Day trips.
- Absence where a satisfactory explanation is not provided.
- Persistent lateness after registers close.

Each case will be considered on its individual merits.

13. Illness and Medical Appointments

Illness

The school will generally authorise illness-related absence where parents provide an appropriate explanation.

Where concerns exist regarding the authenticity of illness, the school may request evidence such as:

- Appointment notifications.
- Prescriptions.
- Medical correspondence.
- Other appropriate evidence.

The school recognises that mental health difficulties may affect attendance and will treat mental-health-related absence with the same importance as physical illness.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Parents should arrange appointments outside school hours wherever possible.

Where appointments must take place during the school day:

- Evidence of the appointment may be requested.
- Pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment where possible.
- The amount of learning missed should be minimised.

14. Attendance, Mental Health and Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Lever Edge Primary Academy recognises that mental health needs can significantly impact attendance.

Where anxiety, emotional wellbeing difficulties or emotionally based school avoidance affect attendance, the school will:

- Work collaboratively with parents and carers.
- Listen to the views of the child.
- Identify and understand barriers.
- Create individual attendance support plans.
- Work alongside health professionals and external agencies when appropriate.
- Consider reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND or medical needs.
- Support reintegration into school through graduated approaches where necessary.

The school's focus will be on support, understanding and removal of barriers.

15. Leave of Absence During Term Time

The law does not grant any entitlement to take holidays during term time.

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised where: **Exceptional Circumstances Exist**, the Headteacher will consider:

- The specific circumstances of each application.
- The impact on learning.
- Previous attendance record.
- Any relevant safeguarding or welfare considerations.

Applications must be submitted in advance. Retrospective applications will not be considered.

The following would not normally be considered exceptional circumstances:

- Cheaper holidays.
- Availability of accommodation.
- Family convenience.
- Birthday celebrations.
- Visiting relatives.
- Family day trips.

16. Religious Observance

The school recognises and respects the diversity of faiths represented within the school community.

Absence for recognised religious observance will be authorised in accordance with statutory guidance.

Parents are requested to:

- Notify the school in advance.
- Discuss arrangements with school where appropriate.

Any additional days beyond those reasonably required may be recorded as unauthorised absence.

17. Attendance Support Pathway

The school adopts a graduated attendance support approach. The focus is on identifying and removing barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity.

Stage 1: Universal Support

All pupils receive:

- High-quality teaching.
- Positive attendance messages.
- Regular attendance celebrations.
- Consistent expectations.

Stage 2: Early Intervention

Triggered when attendance begins to decline or concerning patterns emerge.

Possible actions:

- Telephone contact.
- Informal discussions.
- Parent meetings.
- Attendance monitoring.
- Early support strategies.

Stage 3: Targeted Support

Triggered where attendance falls below expected levels or where concerns continue.

Possible actions:

- Attendance review meeting.
- Attendance support plan.
- Individual attendance targets.
- Additional pastoral support.
- Early Help assessment.
- Support from external agencies.

Stage 4: Persistent Absence Support

Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 90%.

Additional support may include:

- Formal attendance meetings.
- Multi-agency working.
- Attendance panel meetings.
- Local authority involvement.
- Enhanced monitoring.
- Notice to Improve where appropriate.

Stage 5: Severe Absence

Severe absence is defined as attendance below 50%. Severe absence will be treated as a safeguarding priority.

The school may implement:

- Intensive attendance intervention plans.
- Multi-agency strategy meetings.
- Children's Social Care consultation.
- Local Authority attendance intervention.
- Enhanced safeguarding oversight.

Support will remain the primary approach, but legal intervention may be considered where appropriate.

18. Persistent and Severe Absence

The school will closely monitor:

Persistent Absence - Attendance below 90%.

Severe Absence - Attendance below 50%.

The school will:

- Analyse attendance patterns.
- Identify barriers.
- Meet regularly with families.
- Review support plans.
- Access appropriate agency support.
- Evaluate intervention effectiveness.

Attendance is monitored daily and discussed regularly by the Attendance Team and Senior Leadership Team.

19. Working with External Agencies

The school will work collaboratively with:

- Bolton Local Authority.
- School Attendance Service.
- Early Help Services.
- Children's Social Care.
- Health services.
- CAMHS and mental health services.
- School Nursing Team.
- SEND services.
- Educational Psychology services.
- The Virtual School.

Partnership working is essential to removing barriers and improving attendance outcomes.

20. Legal Intervention and Penalty Notices

Lever Edge Primary Academy is committed to working with families to improve attendance through early identification, support and intervention.

Legal intervention will only be considered where:

- Support has been offered and barriers have not been addressed.
- Parents fail to engage with attendance support.
- Unauthorised absence continues to occur.
- The threshold for legal intervention has been met.
- Statutory guidance requires further action.

The school will work closely with Bolton Local Authority when considering legal intervention.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may be considered where:

- A pupil accumulates **10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.**
- There is unauthorised leave taken during term time.
- Parents fail to engage with support and attendance continues to decline.
- Other attendance offences meet the threshold outlined in Bolton Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

Before requesting a Penalty Notice, the school will consider:

- The individual circumstances of the case.
- The support already offered.
- The views of the family.
- Any SEND, safeguarding or Equality Act considerations.
- Whether a Notice to Improve would be more appropriate.

Penalty Notice Charges

In line with the national framework:

First Penalty Notice

Each parent may receive a Penalty Notice of:

- £80 if paid within 21 days.
- £160 if paid within 28 days.

Second Penalty Notice

Where a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent in relation to the same child within a three-year period:

- £160 payable within 28 days.
- No reduced payment period applies.

Third Occurrence

A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued within three years of the first offence for the same child.

Where the threshold is met for a third time, alternative legal action may be considered, including:

- Prosecution under Section 444 Education Act 1996.
- Education Supervision Orders.

All Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Local Authority procedures and DfE guidance.

21. Notices to Improve

Where attendance concerns persist and support has been offered but engagement has been limited, the Local Authority may issue a Notice to Improve.

A Notice to Improve provides parents with a final opportunity to engage with support before legal intervention is considered.

A Notice to Improve will set out:

- Attendance concerns.
- Attendance expectations.
- Support available.
- Actions required by parents.
- Timescales for improvement.
- Potential consequences if attendance fails to improve.

The improvement period will usually be between three and six weeks.

22. Children Missing Education (CME)

The school has a statutory duty to identify, investigate and report children who may be missing education.

A child may be considered at risk of becoming missing from education where:

- Attendance has ceased unexpectedly.
- Contact with parents cannot be established.
- The family cannot be located.
- The child fails to return from a period of absence.

The school will:

- Make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child.
- Contact all known emergency contacts.
- Conduct home visits where appropriate.

- Liaise with other schools and agencies.
- Refer to the Local Authority Children Missing Education Team where required.

The school will follow Bolton Council's Children Missing Education procedures and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

23. Removal from the Admission Register

Pupils will only be removed from the admission register where permitted by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Reasons may include:

- Transfer to another school.
- Elective home education.
- Permanent relocation.
- Reaching the end of compulsory school age.
- Death of a pupil.
- Other circumstances permitted within legislation.

Before a pupil is removed from roll, the school will fulfil all statutory requirements and notify the Local Authority where required.

24. Attendance Monitoring and Data Analysis

Attendance data is monitored regularly by:

- The Headteacher.
- The Attendance Champion.
- The Attendance Team.
- The Trustee Board.

Attendance information will be analysed to:

- Identify individual concerns.
- Identify groups requiring additional support.
- Monitor persistent absence.
- Monitor severe absence.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Inform school improvement priorities.

Data analysis will include:

- Year group attendance.
- Disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils with SEND.
- Children Looked After.
- Previously Looked After Children.
- Pupils with social workers.
- Persistent absentees.
- Severely absent pupils.

Attendance information will be reported to Trustees at least termly.

25. Promotion and Celebration of Attendance

The school promotes attendance through a positive attendance culture.

Strategies include:

- Assemblies
- Newsletters
- Parent communications/ Class Dojo
- Classroom discussions
- Attendance displays
- Individual recognition
- Class rewards
- Attendance certificates and rewards
- Celebration events (Cinema Trips)

The school recognises both:

- Excellent attendance.
- Improved attendance.

No pupil will be disadvantaged where low attendance is linked to protected characteristics, disability, illness or other recognised barriers.

The focus of attendance recognition is to encourage participation, belonging and positive attendance habits.

26. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Attendance information will be managed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- School Records Management Guidance

Attendance records will only be shared with appropriate professionals and agencies where:

- There is a safeguarding requirement
- A statutory duty exists
- Parents have provided consent where appropriate

27. Equality and Inclusion

Lever Edge Primary Academy is committed to ensuring the fair and equitable application of this policy.

The school recognises that some pupils may experience additional barriers to attendance because of:

- Disability
- Special Educational Needs
- Medical conditions
- Mental health needs
- Family circumstances
- Safeguarding concerns

Attendance support will be personalised and proportionate.

Reasonable adjustments will be implemented where required under the Equality Act 2010.

28. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Children Missing Education Procedures
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent - Authorised absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent – Other authorised reasons

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

Absent – unauthorised absence

G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Administrative codes		
z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays