

Attendance Policy

Date produced: March 2020

By: A. Goddard

Review date: Sept 2021

Buile Hill Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavor to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will work consistently towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DFE.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and regional attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Our Policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

School Procedures Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or a designated member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise the absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.25am. In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment or other previously known reason, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The register will close at 9am sharp, meaning that any pupils arriving after this time will be marked absent for the whole morning. The absence will be deemed unauthorised.

As per the current school policy, 10 unauthorised absences will result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice – this will include unauthorised absences due to late arrival after 9am. (An unauthorised absence for lateness is coded as “U”).

A text message will be sent to the child’s parent/guardian to inform them that they were late to school.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting with the relevant staff will be arranged to discuss what support can be offered. This may include a meeting with the student parent/carer.

The afternoon registration is at 12:00 p.m.

First Day Absence

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the first day of absence and on each day of absence thereafter. Reasons for the absence should be given along with an anticipated date for return during the initial call. Upon the pupil’s return the parent/carer must provide written confirmation of the reason for their absence. A phone call should be made every morning if the child is going to be absent. The school cannot presume that the child is absent based on the previous days correspondence - a daily phone call is required.

Please note that contacting the school does not automatically mean the absence is authorised. If attendance drops below 95% medical evidence is required in the form of prescription, hospital letter or appointment card. If attendance is a cause for concern, medical evidence can be rejected and a discussion will be held with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

The school operates a “First Day Response System.” Parents/carers will be contacted but if this fails then a house visit may take place.

Second Day Absence

If there has been no communication as to why a student is absent, the Attendance Officer or Attendance Coordinator will visit the family home. A “contact card” will be left requesting immediate contact if there is no one at home.

Continuing Absence

If the absence continues and the child’s attendance is concerning, home visits will continue and the Attendance Escalation process will be activated. If we have not seen a child and had no communication from home, we will inform the relevant agencies including Children’s Services and/or the police.

Ten Day’s Absence

The Local Authority will be notified regarding any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. The Police and/or Education Welfare Officer will be asked to conduct a welfare check if we are concerned.

Welfare/Courtesy Home visit

Even if parents/guardians have contacted the school, we may complete home visits to offer support, advice or collect any medical evidence or drop school work off if appropriate.

Home visit - Safeguarding

If the school has any safeguarding concerns a home visit will be completed.



Unexplained Absence Letter.

If we receive no communication for school absence, an unexplained absence letter will be generated by the end of the week and sent home. Parent/guardian will have the opportunity to complete the tear off slip for their child to bring back into school and inform attendance for the reason of their absence.

Dear parent/guardian,

Our records show that (Pupils Name) has been absent from school on the following dates:

(Inset date)

Reason for absence

.....
...

Signed..... Relationship

Date

Please check the absence/s above and write the reason why(pupils Name) was absent from school. Please then sign, date and return it to school as soon as possible. It is then at the discretion of the school if this absence(s) is/are authorised.

The attendance of your child MUST improve – if they aren't attending school they may not achieve good GCSE grades. If your child has 10 or more unauthorised absences, we could request that a Penalty Warning is sent to you. This could result in you facing at least at £60 fine or being part of the Fast track to prosecution process. We include very late to school as part of these absences and 10 sessions absence amount to 5 full days of school. If your child has 10 or more absence any further absence WILL NOT be authorised without medical or supporting evidence.

If you wish to discuss any absence please call the attendance line on 0161 921 1361 or the relevant Head of Year on 0161 921 1310.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Anna Goddard

Raising Achievement Co-ordinator (Attendance)

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA Officers, 3 Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27th February 2004.

Buile Hill Academy may request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to be issued in the following circumstances:

If a minimum of 10 sessions or 5 school days of unauthorised absence are taken during the current term for:

- Overt Truancy
- Overt Lateness after 9am
- Parental Condoned Absences
- Holidays in Term Time (only in exceptional circumstances) not authorised by the Headteacher
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement

Frequent Absence It is the responsibility of the Heads of Years, Attendance Officer and Attendance Coordinator to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. Intervention takes place for all students with attendance below 95%. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the parent/carer is alerted by letter and the Attendance Coordinator or Head of Year will work with the student and their family. If there is no improvement, the parent/carer is invited into school. As outlined in the Attendance Programme, various strategies are used to support students and their parent/carers in achieving regular attendance. The school will refer to the School Health Advisor if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer. The Head of Year or the Attendance Coordinator will invite parents into school to discuss any issues and offer practical support and advice.

Local Authority “Fast Track to Court

If a student attendance falls below 92% the school will refer them to the “Fast Track Protocol” guidelines as outlined below.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any other information that has been passed to other students.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be logged on SIMS. If there are attendance concerns about the student that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. (Notes do not automatically authorise absence, however we do log the reason for absence on SIMS).

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers of their responsibility to ensure that their children receive an education. The Attendance Coordinator, Attendance Officer and Head of Year will monitor and offer support to students and their families where the attendance level isn't meeting the school target (95%). An Attendance Agreement is used with all mid year admissions. Prior to whole school holidays, text alerts are used to remind parents/carers of school opening and closing dates.

Holidays in term time

Holidays during term time are not allowed unless exceptional circumstances and agreed with the headteacher, this rule came into force on 1st September 2013.

However, if parent/carers chose to take a student out of school during term time, this must be applied for in writing to the Headteacher and Attendance Coordinator. When booking a holiday we always encourage parents/guardians to look at Buile Hill Academy's own website and confirm term time dates if unsure. We do not advise you to look at other sites such as Salford Council as they may be different. In addition, primary and secondary school dates may differ, even if they are in the same catchment area or are the link school for transition.

If parent/carers remove their child from school for the purpose of a family holiday without permission a Local Authority Penalty Notice will be applied for by the School, which will lead to a Fine. We do encourage holidays to be taken during the 13 weeks school leave allocated throughout the academic year.

If we believe a family are on holiday we will complete a home visit and complete investigations.

In addition, Buile Hill Academy do not authorise absences taken prior or post an allocated school holiday. This message is sent via text regularly to parents and carers.

Attendance Awards

School uses the system to reward students who have good or improving attendance:

The following attendance rewards are promoted in school:

- Trips and visits
- Early Lunch Pass
- Easter & Christmas games and rewards
- Merit points
- Prom
- End of year trip
- Certificates and badges
- Celebration Assemblies for 100%

At the end of each academic year rewards are presented to individual students achieving 100%, at the Presentation Evening.

The Registration System

The School uses a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. National codes are used to record attendance information. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved education activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved education activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence

F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed OR days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved education activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved education activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved education activity
W	Work experience	Approved education activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have. either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Student Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Attendance Escalation Process

The purpose of this Programme is to identify unmet needs to improve outcomes for our students through working in partnership with students, their families and the wider agencies. The expectation is that each student will have a minimum attendance of 98%. This expectation is communicated to parent/carers and students on admission, through various forms of communication such as termly in whole school mail shots, weekly Form Time and through assemblies. The Attendance Coordinator and the Attendance Officer monitor attendance on a daily basis working closely with the Form Tutors, Subject Tutors, Faculty Leaders and Deputy Head. Parent/carers are aware via the school prospectus, website and mail shots of who to contact school if their child is absent.

Attendance interventions will begin when attendance drops below 95%.

A first day response to absence is operated, if by day two of the absence no contact has been made and we are unaware of the reason for the absence, the Attendance Officer or Coordinator will visit the home. Home visits are carried out daily by the Attendance Team.



School is aware that low attendance levels impact on students' attainments and social care issues may impact on attendance, for these reasons the Pastoral Team continually assess students' needs and school-based support is tailored to meeting individual needs.

There are close working relationships with the wider agencies such as, the School Health Advisor and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and locality team support services who regularly attend meetings and are readily available for consultation and advice.

The Education Welfare Officer meets regularly with the Attendance Coordinator and the Attendance Officer, individual cases are discussed and actions are agreed such as Attendance Panels and Fast Track to prosecution. In cases where a decision has been taken not to authorise any further absences, agreements are made with the EWO regarding the monitoring period and attendance target e.g. a timescale is agreed upon and with no significant improvement, the EWO commences legal enforcement.

Our aim is to improve outcomes for our students through working in partnership with students, their families and the wider agencies.

A student's needs may dictate for example that a FAF (Family Assessment Framework) is required; if so the member of staff in school will complete this with the Attendance Coordinator and the parent/carer and pupil.

Vulnerable Groups Various staff will work with all students and their parent/carers where attendance is below 95% and are classed as vulnerable.

LEVEL 1 – 95% and Below

L1 letter is issued to the parent/carer as soon as a student's attendance dips below 95%.

The pupil is spoken to by the Head of House.

LEVEL 2 If there is little or no improvement in attendance, L2 letter is issued inviting the parent/carer into school to have a meeting with the Head of Year. There may be some underlying reasons why the student does not attend school. Wider agency support for the family or student may now be needed. The purpose of this meeting is to offer support, information and raise awareness of the consequences. At Level 2 no more absences are authorised. Attendance is constantly monitored and the student's home visited on the first day of absence. If they reach 10 UA absences in this period, a Penalty Warning is issued.

Attendance Panel

If there is still no improvement after the monitoring period the parent/carers are again invited into school via the Attendance Panel letter. At this point, the EWO is also invited and where appropriate school nurse and Head of Year. (School Health clarify any underlying medical



reasons for absences). If a parent/carer does not attend a decision is made in their absence. This could include a home visit, Penalty Notice referral or Fast Track to court for prosecution. Pupils will also be invited into the attendance panel meeting to discuss their attendance.

At this meeting a decision is then made jointly with the EWO in relation to include the parent in the termly cohort of Fast Track to improve attendance: if the parent does not attend the meeting a decision is still made in their absence.

LETTERS

Level 1 Letter: Warning of Fixed Penalty Notice

Parent/Guardian of

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

RE: Attendance - Level 1

I am writing to you to express my concern about your child's attendance this academic year. (student name) attendance to date is ____% which is below the expected attendance figure of 95%.

I need to advise you that when your child has 10 or more unauthorised absences you may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice warning.

As you will be aware, competition for both college places and job opportunities is fierce and good grades at GCSE level can provide a sound stepping stone for your child's future.

Level 2 Letter: No Improvement

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

RE: Level 2 Attendance & Punctuality

I am writing to you to express concern about your child's attendance. Their attendance is currently ____% which is below the expected attendance figure of 95%. If (Child's Name) is to achieve her academic potential, then her attendance needs to improve during the next academic year. I trust you will endeavour to ensure that this happens, as I am sure you want Maisie to do well at school. I have enclosed a copy of (Child's Name) registration certificate for your information. I have arranged an appointment to discuss the matter further on

_____ here at Buile Hill with your child's Head of House. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please ring your child's head of house to rearrange a mutually convenient time.

The local Authority states that "It is your responsibility as a parent to ensure the regular school attendance of your child. Failure to do so could result in further action being taken in the Magistrate's Court. Magistrates can impose penalties including a fine not exceeding £2,500 and/or imprisonment of up to 3 months. I hope it will not prove necessary to follow this course of action.

On arrival at the meeting please ask to see your child's head of house.

Yours faithfully,

Miss A Goddard (Raising Achievement Coordinator – Attendance)



Attendance Panel Letter:

Parent/Guardian of
(Date)

Dear parent/guardian,

Attendance Panel Meeting

I am writing to inform you that Joe's attendance MUST improve. They currently have VERY POOR attendance to school (Please see attached registration certificate). Due to this poor attendance we would like you to attend an Attendance Panel meeting. The panel will involve our Attendance Officer (Anna Goddard) and the local authority's Education Welfare Officer (Adrian Roberts), and, if available, your child's head of year.

Date:

Time:

The attendance of your child MUST improve – if they aren't attending school they may not achieve good GCSE grades. Your child's attendance at school is VERY POOR so your attendance at the meeting is extremely important. We will NOT be able to rearrange this meeting.

Please note that from the date of this letter we will NOT be authorising any future absences for your child. If their attendance doesn't improve they may NOT achieve good GCSE grades.

Please bring with you any supporting evidence that you have which links to your child's attendance. This could be medical evidence, such as prescriptions or hospital letters etc. This meeting will give us a chance to understand why your child is missing so much school and explore what we can do to support them.

If you wish to discuss any absence, please call the attendance line on 0161 921 1361 or the relevant Head of Year on 0161 921 1310.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs A Goddard

Raising Achievement Co-ordinator

Fast Track Protocol (FT)

Specific Evidence

The Fast Track (FT) Prosecution period starts on day 3 AFTER the Phase 1 Letter is issued by the EWO, therefore the schools attendance evidence to prove FT is based on previous attendance.

Buile Hill Academy evidence must be brought to all Fast Track meetings.

The FT chronology details significant events relating to the child that may affect their attendance. This will also include contact and responses from parent/carers regarding attendance and dates when the school attendance letters were sent. It will also detail if a parent/carer arrived/or did not arrive (DNA) any attendance meetings, points discussed and actions agreed. If the parent DNA, the FT Chronology will detail what action the Buile Hill Academy has completed. This will be recorded on the FT chronology form and child file.

The FT Chronology will detail actions agreed with parents during any communication.

Once a FT referral has been made by Buile Hill Academy, it is vital the evidence building continues. This means home visits/phone calls/discussions with the student/parent/carer will continue. The FT chronology will reflect these actions.

If applicable, the FT chronology must also state why a Penalty Warning was not issued prior to FT. Criteria 90% to 94.9% - Buile Hill Academy to request a Penalty Warning. (PW) 90% and below – Buile Hill Academy refer for Fast Track.

In some cases, requesting a Penalty Warning is not appropriate and refers directly to Fast Track if attendance is a major cause for concern.

If Fast track is requested completion of a Section 9 is required. This is a legal document used as evidence in court to prove what interventions have taken place prior and during the Fast Track (FT) period. The information provided must be correct, therefore keeping the FT files up to date is important especially if the case goes to court. If the parent/s plead not guilty, Buile Hill Academy will be requested to appear at Manchester Magistrates' Court to provide evidence.

We would advise all parents/guardians to attend any attendance meetings arranged by Buile Hill Academy or Salford Council. The purpose is to avoid court and provide support to improve attendance.



SALFORD CITY COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF WITNESS

(C.J. Act 1967., s.9; M.C. Act 1980, ss5A (3)(a) and 5B; M.C. Rules 1981, r.70)

STATEMENT OF:

Age of Witness (if over 18 enter "over 18"):

CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Date	Significant or key event	Source

This is the Witness Statement completed by Buile Hill Academy.

SALFORD CITY COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF WITNESS

(C.J. Act 1967., s.9; M.C. Act 1980, ss5A (3)(a) and 5B; M.C. Rules 1981, r.70)

STATEMENT OF:

Age of Witness (if over 18 enter "over 18"):

I am a (job title) based at (full address of school). (Child's name) resides at (address) with their parent, (parents name).



Discuss background to case, why you made a referral to Education Welfare Officer. Discuss Attendance Panel, meetings or anything that has significant relevance to the case.

Exhibit any letters that have been sent by the school to the parents. PROVIDE COPIES.

Exhibit any minutes that are relevant to the case. PROVIDE COPIES.

Include Chronology of Significant Events (exhibit /02) this should list text messages, letters and phone calls to parents and any other significant events around and during fast track period.

The facts and matters set out in this statement were compiled from documents held by the school. The documents to which I have referred form part of the school's records maintained in the course of its profession. These records were compiled by people who had or may reasonably be supposed to have had, personal knowledge of the matters dealt with in the course of their profession but of which those people cannot reasonably be expected, to have recollection of those matters having regard to the time which has elapsed since they created the document and to all the relevant circumstances.