

BELLE VUE GIRLS' ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	Approved by	Date of Approval	Next Review Date
JPA	LGB	October 2023	Sept 2024

Contents

1. [Trust Policy Statement](#)
2. [Aims of the Policy](#)
3. [Introduction](#)
4. [Key Staff](#)
5. [How Parents can Support their Child's Attendance at School](#)
6. [Daily Attendance Routines](#)
7. [Daily Absence Procedures](#)
8. [Leave of Absence Requests](#)
9. [Attendance Register Codes](#)
10. [Monitoring and Tracking of Attendance Data](#)
11. [Whole School Attendance Strategy](#)
12. [Rewards and Incentives](#)
13. [Punctuality](#)
14. [Pupils with Medical Conditions, SEND and Social Workers](#)
15. [In-Year Admissions](#)
16. [Formalising Support](#)
17. [Links with Guidance and Other Policies](#)
18. [Appendix One: Leave of Absence Request Form](#)
19. [Appendix Two: Absence for Sporting or Performing Arts Activity Request Form](#)
20. [Appendix Three: Absconding Procedures](#)

Trust Policy Statement

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) regards the excellent attendance of children as integral to the success of the pupils and thus the success of their academies. For the purpose of this policy, the term Trust refers to BDAT. The Trust is committed to ensuring that pupils and parents/carers understand the absolute importance of full attendance at our schools.

As part of our focus on diversity and inclusion, BDAT pledges that our policies will seek to promote equality, fairness, and respect for all staff and pupils. Our policies reflect the BDAT values of inclusion, compassion, aspiration, resilience, and excellence. By working closely with a range of stakeholders, such as our school, union, and HR colleagues, we have ensured that BDAT's policies do not unlawfully discriminate against anybody.

Aims of the Policy

This policy is intended to outline the expectations, procedures and key staff in relation to attendance as well as the strategy and support in place to ensure pupils maximise their attendance at school.

We envisage that this policy will act as a 'user manual' for pupils, families and staff when it comes to attendance at school and will keep it under annual review. We will use our stakeholder voice mechanisms (e.g. pupil surveys, parent forum etc.) in order to ensure that feedback around this policy is taken on board when the policy is reviewed.

This policy will be published on the Belle Vue Girls' Academy website and will be recirculated to parents at the start of each academic year, as well as when it is updated at any other point.

Introduction

At Belle Vue Girls' Academy, our priorities are that our pupils are safe, healthy and successful, all of which are helped by attending school regularly. We believe that working in partnership with families is the best way to maximise attendance at school in order to achieve these priorities. Our aim is for Belle Vue Girls' Academy to be a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

We know that regular attendance at school is vitally important in helping pupils to reach their academic potential, to help them grow socially and emotionally and to develop a range of life skills which will support them as they enter the world of work or higher education at the end of their compulsory education.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular school attendance and educational progress and achievement. Children who frequently miss school often fall behind and, ultimately, they are likely to have fewer qualifications at lower grades, which can impact on their ability to access further education and/or employment.

When it comes to school attendance, it is easy to think that 90% attendance is at a positive level but the reality is that this is equivalent to one day off school per fortnight or 95 hours of learning missed across a year. Children who have less than 90% attendance are regarded as ‘persistent absentees’ from school by government standards.

It is our expectation that our pupils will have a minimum of 97% attendance over the course of each year. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Strong school attendance for every child is in everyone’s best interests and it is the responsibility of us all. We are determined to work together with pupils and their families to make this happen.

Key Staff

Staff Member	Job Title	Role
Nurjahan Ali Arobi	Attendance Governor	To ensure that the governing body have an accurate view of attendance within school, support escalation procedures where needed and provide an appropriate level of challenge to school leaders to ensure that the attendance strategy is effective.
Mrs D Anness	Headteacher	To ensure that there is a strong culture of promoting excellent attendance and a strategy which is led effectively by the senior leader responsible in this area.
Mr J Patterson	Senior Deputy Headteacher	Strategic leadership of whole school attendance strategy including policy development, staff training and data analysis.
Ms F Nisar	Child Protection Officer	Operational leadership of safeguarding and pupil welfare, working with the Lead Attendance Manager to ensure all students are safe.
Mrs I Aziz	Lead Attendance Manager	Operational leadership of attendance including direct work with families, home visits and liaison with Education Welfare around any legal proceedings/fixed penalty notices
Lead Pastoral Manager – Mrs S Rehman Year 7 – Mrs Bibi Year 8 – Miss H Naz Year 9 – Mrs J Palmer Year 10 – Mrs S Rehman Year 11 – Mrs R Kausir Sixth Form – Mrs T Mahmood	Pastoral Team	To support the pupils with maintaining excellent attendance by working directly with pupils and families to overcome any barriers to attendance as part of the whole school strategy.
Ms F Bibi	Student Services Manager	To support with the daily attendance and absence procedures including updating registers and contacting parents via text message, email and phone call.

How Parents can Support their Child's Attendance at School

This section of the policy provides advice and guidance to parents as to how they can support their children in ensuring excellent attendance at school.

Excellent attendance at school is the part of their child's education that parents have the most impact upon. This is why [Parental Responsibility Measures](#) are clear that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly. Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act also states that:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence".

The following are some ways in which parents can support their child's attendance:

- Be aware of their legal responsibilities in ensuring their child attends school regularly
- Ensure that their child arrives to school punctually every day
- Reinforce to their children the importance of education and how attending regularly leads to higher achievement
- Contact school in a timely manner (before 8am) in the event that their child is going to be absent that day
- Ensure that any medical appointments are booked outside of school hours wherever possible
- Ensure that any leave of absence request is only made in the most exceptional of circumstances
- Support their child's attendance (and therefore achievement) by not taking holidays during term time
- Notify school immediately if there are any changes to details of named contacts for their child
- Work in partnership with school staff when there are concerns about their child's attendance
- Support the school with any consequences that are implemented as a result of their child truanting or being late to school or lessons

Daily Attendance Routines

The timings of the school day are outlined below:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
8:20-8:55	Tutor & PD	Tutor & PD	Tutor & PD	Tutor & PD	Tutor & PD	Tutor & PD	Tutor & PD
9:00-10:00	Lesson 1	Lesson 1	Lesson 1	Lesson 1	Lesson 1	Lesson 1	Lesson 1
10:00-10:20	Break	Break	Lesson 2	Lesson 2	Break	Lesson 2	Break
10:20-11:00	Lesson 2	Lesson 2			Lessons 2		Lesson 2
11:00-11:20							
11:20-12:20	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Lesson 3
12:20-12:50	Lunch	Lunch	Lesson 4	Lesson 4	Lunch	Lesson 4	Lunch
12:50-1:20	Lesson 4	Lesson 4			Lesson 4		Lesson 4
1:20-1:50							
1:50-2:50	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5

Belle Vue Girls' Academy is open to pupils from 8:00am and they will be welcomed by staff on the gate and surrounding areas to support them in being ready for the day.

Before the day begins, pupils will be supervised in the Quad & Canteen areas. Other areas of school will be out of bounds during this time as they are not supervised.

We expect all pupils to be in school by 8.20am at the latest so that they have time to organise themselves and get to their first class punctually. This will enable their school day to begin in a calm and positive manner rather than having to rush.

Form Tutors are a key member of staff for every pupil and parents, as they may be the only member of staff who sees the pupil every day. Form Time is a key part of the day as the following occur during this time:

- Key information and messages are communicated to pupils around items such as room changes, school reports, trips etc.
- Pupils are supported with addressing any uniform or equipment issues to ensure that they are prepared for the school day.
- Lanyards & ID Cards are checked and monitored.
- The achievements of pupils linked to the school values are celebrated. The Form Tutor will also provide advice and guidance to pupils who have not demonstrated these values so that they can improve.
- The Personal Development Curriculum is taught.
- Each year group has an assembly one day per week during this time.

The official morning register closes at 9.45am. Pupils arriving between 8.25 and 9.45 will be given a late register code (the 'L' mark). This does count as a present mark towards their attendance as they have arrived before the official closing time of the morning register.

Where a pupil arrives after 9.45am, they will be given an unauthorised late register code (the 'U' mark). This counts as an absence mark towards their attendance as they have arrived after the official closing time of the morning register.

Pupils who are regularly late to school can expect to receive a consequence in line with the Behaviour Policy (see section on Punctuality). If pupils need support with their punctuality, we would encourage them or their parents to get in contact with an appropriate member of staff in school (see Key Staff section).

The official afternoon register is taken at 1pm. Registers are also taken in every other lesson for safeguarding reasons but it is the official morning register mark and official afternoon register mark which make up a student's attendance percentage.

Daily Absence Procedures

This section of the policy outlines the procedures that parents should follow to report their child absent from school and the systems in place within school to follow this up.

For safeguarding reasons, it is vital that school and families work in partnership so that we know why each child is absent from school on any given occasion.

Absence and First Day Call: If your child is unable to attend school you should inform us on the first day of absence before 8am by telephone (**01274 492341**). You will need to state:

- the pupil's name
- your relationship to the pupil i.e. parent/carer etc.
- the reason for absence.

Parents/carers are required to call each day a student is absent. **A member of staff will call you back to discuss the absence every day** and ascertain when your child is likely to return to school. If you are not contactable by phone, a **home visit will be made.**

It is important that parents are specific in the reasons that their child is absent from school (e.g. 'vomiting' or 'fever' rather than 'unwell' or 'a bit under the weather') as this enables us to track patterns of absence more effectively with individuals and particular groups of pupils, therefore enabling more effective support (see section on Tracking and Monitoring of Attendance Data). This information will be processed by the admin team so that registers are accurately recorded for the day for any child who is absent from school (see section on Attendance Register Codes for more details).

Where a pupil is absent from school for ten consecutive days and no reason has been provided, this will result in a referral to Bradford Education Welfare for further support as they could be deemed as a Child Missing in Education according to local authority procedures.

In any cases where a pupil has been marked present earlier in the day but then does not turn up to a lesson, the teacher will report their absence to the pastoral team who will attempt to locate the pupil.

If the pupil cannot be found, a safeguarding call will be made as a priority to the parents/carers to inform them of the absence (truancy). We do not hold mobile phone numbers for pupils so parents are best placed to contact them.

If parents/carers cannot be contacted, staff will attempt to contact other emergency contacts held on the school system to inform them and request their support. If this is unsuccessful, a risk assessment will be undertaken and the Police may be informed. Please see the Absconding Procedures outlined in Appendix 3 for further details.

Pupils in years 7-11 are not allowed to leave the school site during the day. On the rare occasions when this may be necessary (e.g. they have become severely unwell at school or have an emergency appointment), the following will apply:

- Pupils are only allowed to leave the site with parental/carers knowledge and permission.
- Where a pupil is unwell or there are potential safeguarding concerns, pupils will not be allowed to leave unless accompanied by an adult.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from school. If a pupil does this, they will be regarded as truanting from school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Only urgent appointments should be attended during the school day and pupils should return to school after them.
- Pupils must be signed out at Student Services on leaving school and signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from school, parents should report to main reception before the pupil is permitted to leave the site.

These measures are taken in order to promote the safety and welfare of our pupils. It is vital that we have at least two contacts on the school system for every pupil so that we are able to do this effectively. Please email community@bvga.bdat-academies.org if you would like to add any additional contacts for your child.

We appreciate the support of parents in informing us in a timely manner of any absences of their children so that we can ensure that all of our pupils are safe.

Leave of Absence Requests

This section of the policy details the procedure in relation to leave of absence requests which will only be authorised in the most exceptional of circumstances.

The Belle Vue Girls' Academy term times and school holiday dates are published in advance and are published on the academy website <https://www.bvgacademy.co.uk/for-parentscarers/term-dates>. Training days are published as soon as we have agreed them but may be subject to change. Any changes will be communicated to parents at the earliest opportunity.

From 1 September 2013, a change to government laws means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for pupils to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. In line with the government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence from school. Some examples may include religious observance or sporting/musical competitions. Parents/carers should make any such request at least three weeks in advance and in writing by completing the form in Appendix One and returning to main reception. All requests are considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request. Other factors will be taken into account including:

- The time of year the pupil will be absent (e.g. a Year 11 pupil missing a GCSE examination would be extremely detrimental to them)
- The previous attendance record of the pupil
- The number of previous requests for leave of absence

Parents will be notified of a decision either by telephone or email. Where a parental request has been refused, and parents continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

We reserve the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice Fine under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 where a child has ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a term.

Please note that from April 2023, in order to tackle unauthorised leave, Bradford Local Authority may consider legal action through the magistrates court rather than issuing a penalty notice. This is because Bradford has double the rate of absences due to unauthorised leave when compared to the national average. Further information can be found here: <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/education-safeguarding/attendance/penalty-notices>

Attendance Register Codes

This section of the policy outlines the attendance codes that are used on the register. This is not a complete list and further information can be found in the 'DFE School Attendance Guidance' which is linked in the 'Links with Guidance and Other Policies' section.

The attendance register is a compulsory legal document which must be accurately recorded by schools using these attendance codes.

Present Codes

These are used when a pupil is present in school or is at an approved off-site educational activity. They include:

- / = Morning present mark
- \ = Afternoon present mark
- L = Arrived late but before register closed
- B = Present at an approved off-site educational activity (e.g. at alternative provision)
- D = Dual-registered and expected to attend their other provision
- J = Attending an interview (e.g. a Y11 student at a Post-16 college)
- P = Approved sporting activity (e.g. a pupil who plays for the academy of a professional football club)
- V = Educational visit (e.g. where pupils are out on a school trip)
- W = Work experience (e.g. where a Y10/11 student is accessing an approved work experience placement)

Authorised Absence Codes

These are used when a pupil is absent from school but we have authorised the absence. These marks count negatively against a pupil's attendance but do not count against parents when considerations are made around any legal proceedings. They include:

- I = Absent due to illness (please note that in line with Bradford Local Authority guidance, medical evidence may be required to authorise this type of absence if a pupil's attendance is less than 90%)
- M = Absent due to medical appointment (please try to make these outside of school hours wherever possible)
- C = Other authorised absence (e.g. to attend a funeral)
- E = Absent due to being issued with a suspension from school
- R = Absent due to religious observance

Unauthorised Absence Codes

These are used when a pupil is absent from school but we have not authorised the absence. These marks count negatively against a pupil's attendance and may inform any legal proceedings against parents (see section on Legal Proceedings for more details). They include:

- N = Absent without a reason being provided. As detailed above, we will make all efforts to contact parents to find out why their child is absent. If we are unable to do so, 'N' marks will be changed to 'O' marks (see below) after five working days.
- O = Absent from school without authorisation. Some examples that would fall into this category include:
 - No reason being provided for an absence
 - The child is refusing to come to school
 - Truancy
 - Oversleeping/missing the bus
 - School uniform not clean
 - Birthday treats
 - Looking after younger siblings
- G = Absent due to holiday in term time
- U = Arrival after the closing time of the official morning register.

Monitoring and Tracking of Attendance Data

This section of the policy details how we track, monitor, share and analyse attendance data for individual pupils and cohorts of pupils.

In order for all stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, governors and external agencies) to work in partnership to ensure excellent attendance for pupils at Belle Vue Girls' Academy, it is important that we track the attendance of pupils and share this information.

This will be done by the following means:

- Individual pupil attendance data will be shared on a weekly basis with Form Tutors/class teachers who will then share it with their class.
- Pupils will record their attendance on a weekly basis in Character & Aspiration
- Parents can view their child's attendance via the Class Charts Parent App.
- Parents will also be informed about attendance in relation to their child individually and the school more widely through newsletters, social media, academic progress reports, text message, email and letter.
- Attendance data by Form Group will be shared with pupils in assembly. This will feed into competitions (see Rewards and Incentives section).
- Attendance data of different cohorts will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team on a weekly basis. Examples of cohorts include year groups, pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and pupils eligible for free school meals. This will then enable leaders to plan specific intervention to support any cohorts whose attendance is below expected.
- Attendance data of different cohorts will also be shared with the whole staff in briefings so that teachers are aware of which pupils may need extra support.
- Attendance data will be shared with Governors on a half-termly basis so they can fulfil their responsibilities in supporting and challenging senior leaders in relation to the attendance strategy and the impact it is having.
- Attendance data will be shared with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team on a termly basis. They will then provide support, advice, and guidance to school on how to make further improvements.
- We will consider local, regional, and national data to help give us context as to the attendance of students at insert school name.
- Where attendance interventions are implemented with pupils to help them improve their school attendance, we will use data to monitor the impact and assess the efficacy of the intervention.

This list is not exhaustive, but it is intended to ensure that attendance remains at the front of everyone's minds so that we can work together in partnership to secure excellent attendance for all pupils.

Whole School Attendance Strategy

This section of the policy outlines the overall strategy in relation to supporting pupils to maintain excellent school attendance.

Our strategy is based on a tier model in line with best practice as recommended by the Department for Education, with the level of support dependent upon the level of attendance of the pupil.

Pupils whose attendance is below 90% are regarded as 'Persistently Absent Pupils' by the government and pupils whose attendance is below 50% are regarded as 'Severely Absent Pupils'.

The framework below shows the different tiers of the attendance model and the impact this has on their overall attendance.

Attendance Tier	Impact on Student
<u>Tier 1</u> 100%	Pupils in Tier 1 do not miss any days of school per year, and they access all learning opportunities available to them. They have the strongest chance of fulfilling their potential. At our school, students in this attendance tier typically achieve ½ a grade above their expected grades.
<u>Tier 2</u> 97-99%	Pupils in Tier 2 miss up to 7 days of school per year which is up to 35 hours of learning. They access the majority of learning opportunities available to them and have a strong chance of fulfilling their potential. At our school, students in this attendance tier typically achieve ½ a grade above their expected grades.
<u>Tier 3</u> 95%-97%	Pupils in Tier 3 miss up to 10 days of school per year which is around 50 hours of learning. They are at risk of underachievement as a result. At our school, students in this attendance tier typically achieve ½ a grade above their expected grades.
<u>Tier 4</u> 90%-95%	Pupils in Tier 4 miss up to 19 days of school per year. This is approximately 95 hours of learning. They are deemed to be pupils who are at risk of persistent absenteeism and are at high risk of underachievement. At our school, students in this attendance tier typically achieve grades in line with their expected grades.
<u>Tier 5</u> 88%-90%	Pupils in Tier 5 miss up to 23 days of school per year. This is approximately 110 hours of learning. They are classed as Persistently Absent pupils by the government and are at severe risk of underachievement. At our school, students in this attendance tier typically achieve below their expected grades.
<u>Tier 6</u> 50%-88%	Pupils in Tier 6 miss between 23 and 95 days of school per year. This is between one and three entire half-terms or 115-475 hours of learning. They are classed as Persistently Absent pupils by the government and are at extreme risk of underachievement. At our school, students in this attendance tier typically achieve significantly below their expected grades.
<u>Tier 7</u> Below 50%	Pupils in Tier 7 miss over 95 days of school per year. This is over 475 hours of learning. They are deemed to be Severely Absent pupils by the government and are at critical risk of underachievement. At our school, students in this attendance tier typically achieve significantly below their expected grades.

In order to motivate and support pupils to maintain excellent attendance or improve their attendance, we will utilise a range of strategies which may include, but aren't limited to:

- Access to rewards in line with the Behaviour & Welfare Policy
- Positive communication home
- Mentoring
- Communication home so parents are aware of concerns and need to improve.

- Student and/or parental meetings with key staff
- Attendance panel meeting with Governors
- Referrals to external agencies (e.g. CAMHS, Education Welfare and Children's Social Care)

Rewards and Incentives

This section of the policy outlines the ways that excellent attendance is promoted and incentivised at Belle Vue Girls' Academy. Further information can be found in the Behaviour & Welfare Policy.

Punctuality

This section of the policy outlines the expectations of pupils in relation to their punctuality to school and throughout the school day.

Good punctuality on a morning and to each lesson is crucial. Lateness to a lesson causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class as it leaves teachers having to repeat instructions and breaks the flow of a lesson. It is, therefore, a collective responsibility of all pupils to ensure they are punctual throughout the day.

We expect all pupils to be on school site by 8.20am at the latest so that they have time to organise themselves and get to class by 8.25am when the morning register is taken. This will enable their school day to begin in a calm and positive manner rather than having to rush.

We then expect all pupils to arrive punctually to all their lessons. Whilst we appreciate that it takes time to move around the school building (consideration will be given to this), it is not acceptable for pupils to arrive late for lessons after social times or significantly after the rest of their classmates. As detailed above, this has a negative impact on learning and is not fair on the other pupils in the class.

Pupils who are persistently late will be sanctioned through the detention system. Please see the Behaviour & Welfare Policy for further details.

Pupils with Medical Conditions, SEND and Social Workers

This section of the policy outlines the considerations that will be made for pupils with medical needs, Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and other vulnerabilities.

At Belle Vue Girls' Academy we hold the same level of aspiration and high expectations for all of our pupils. We recognise, however, that some pupils may have additional needs or vulnerabilities that impact upon their attendance at school.

For example, some pupils may have diagnosed medical conditions which require them to attend regular hospital appointments during school hours, or complex situations at home with which Children's Social Care are supporting.

In these circumstances, we will work together with families and other professionals involved to ensure that any necessary reasonable adjustments to this policy are made. This could include referral to the [Bradford Medical Needs and Hospital Education Service](#) who are the local authority team responsible for providing education to children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs. Please refer to our '[Children with medical needs who can't attend school](#)' policy for further details.

In-Year Admissions

This section of the policy outlines some measures that are implemented for pupils who join BVGA outside of the normal round of admissions (i.e., when they move up from Primary School into Year 7).

All our attendance data from the past few years indicates that collectively students who Belle Vue Girls' Academy on in-year transfers have attendance rates significantly below the minimum of expectation of 97%. In fact, the average is approximately 75% which we know equates to around 235 hours of learning lost per academic year.

It is, therefore, our policy not to authorise any absence of pupils who join on in-year admissions during the first six months of their time here, unless supporting evidence is provided (e.g., a doctor's note or appointment card).

Formalising Support

This section of the policy outlines the more intense and formal support that will be used when informal measures have been tried without success.

We will work with Bradford Local Authority and other local agencies in a joint fashion to share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms).

We will have termly targeted support meetings with the local authority's attendance team to work together on the support that is needed for persistently and severely absent pupils. We will also share information from our registers with the local authority in order to support this.

In their 2022 report, 'Securing Good Attendance and Tackling Persistent Absence', Ofsted advise schools to take an approach where they, 'listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate'.

This means that where a pupil's attendance is an ongoing concern, we will work with families and make referrals to external agencies to secure support in removing barriers to attendance and establishing strong attendance routines. These include:

- Parenting Contract – a voluntary agreement between parents and governors which, if unsuccessful, will lead to more formal action
- Penalty Notices – a fine issued by the local authority where a student has repeated unauthorised absence

- Education Supervision Order – where a court mandates the local authority to supervise a child's education for a period of time
- Parenting Order – where a court places a mandatory order on parents to attend guidance sessions and improve their child's attendance at school
- Prosecution – where a court prosecutes a parent who has failed to ensure their child attends school regularly under the Education Act 1996

When implementing more formal support, we will follow the staged intervention approach which is recommended by Bradford Local Authority. Further details of this can be found here: <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/education-safeguarding/attendance/poor-attendance-interventions>

These formal routes are a last resort once more informal support has been exhausted, however, we feel it is important to be open with parents in stating that we will not shy away from using them where necessary in order to help every pupil access their education.

Links with Guidance and Other Policies

The Belle Vue Girls' Academy Attendance Policy has due regard to the law on areas including:

- [Parental Responsibility Measures](#)
- [Children Missing Education](#)
- [Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School](#)
- [Suspensions and Exclusions](#)
- [Alternative Provision](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)
- [DFE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance](#)
- [DFE Summary Table of Responsibilities to Improve School Attendance](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [The European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

This policy should also be read in line with the following Belle Vue Girls' Academy policies:

- Safeguarding
- Suspensions and Exclusions
- Behaviour & Welfare
- Children with medical needs who can't attend school
- Accessibility Plan
- SEN

APPENDIX ONE: APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM BELLE VUE GIRLS' ACADEMY

Date of Request:

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. Bradford Council expects all parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Absences due to holidays, taken during term time can seriously impact on a pupil's academic attainment. Bradford Council's policy is to only grant leave of absence in the most exceptional circumstances. If permission is given for leave of absence the Headteacher will determine the number of days of authorised absence.

Taking 'Leave of Absence' without the school's permission could result in you being issued with a Penalty Notice fine of £60. Penalty Notices are issued, per parent per child. Where permission has been given for 'Leave of Absence', if you fail to return your child within 10 school days of the agreed return date, your child may be removed from the school roll.

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school at least two weeks before the intended departure.

PARENT SECTION

Surname of child		First name of child	
Date of birth		Class	
Surname of parent/guardian		First name of parent/guardian	
Address of child			
Postcode		Telephone number	
Reason for absence			
Length of absence applied for (number of school days)		Destination	
Date of departure		Date due back in school	
Emergency telephone contact in the Bradford district		Emergency telephone contact abroad	
Parent's/guardian's signature			Date

SCHOOL SECTION

Date of meeting with parent/s		Headteacher's signature		Date
Leave of Absence	Approved for		School days	
	Not approved for		School days	
Reason for refusing Leave of Absence				

Please Retain for School Records

In the event of the child not returning within 10 schools days of the agreed return date and no satisfactory explanation has been provide for the none return, the child can be removed from the school register. A Children Missing Education referral should be made to the Education Social Work Service who will require a copy of this form. For further information please see Bradford Council Leave of Absence, Holidays in Term Time and Extended Leave of Absence – Guidance for Schools or Children Missing Education 'If A Child Goes Missing'.

APPENDIX TWO: Authorised Absences for Exceptional Circumstances such as Sporting or Performing Arts Activities (Theatre, Film, Modelling etc)

Belle Vue Girls' Academy appreciates that in certain circumstances, pupils will benefit from being able to partake in certain sporting or performing arts events. To this end, the below criteria will be followed:

- It must always be recognised that any absences of this nature are completely at the discretion of the Headteacher
- Each individual application for absence will be considered on its merits and open licences will not be granted under any circumstances.
- Each application must be submitted with the full form (license) to the Headteacher. Part licenses (i.e. the individual sheet requiring signature) will not be accepted.
- At all Key Stages, the Headteacher will consider absence on an individual basis.

Each absence will take into consideration:

- the number of days previously authorised
- educational attainment – progress to date
- examination and assessment commitments
- time of year
- attendance to date
- extended behaviour and reward points

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school at least two weeks before the intended absence.

PARENT SECTION

Surname of child		First name of child	
Date of birth		Class	
Surname of parent/guardian		First name of parent/guardian	
Address of child			
Postcode		Telephone number	
Reason for absence		Date(s) of Absence	
Parent's/guardian's signature			Date

SCHOOL SECTION

Absence Approved – Yes/No		Headteacher's signature		Date
If no, reason for refusing Leave of Absence				

Please Retain for School Records

In the event of the child not returning within 10 schools days of the agreed return date and no satisfactory explanation has been provide for the none return, the child can be removed from the school register. A Children Missing Education referral should be made to the Education Social Work Service who will require a copy of this form. For further information please see Bradford Council Leave of Absence, Holidays in Term Time and Extended Leave of Absence – Guidance for Schools or Children Missing Education 'If A Child Goes Missing'.

APPENDIX THREE: BELLE VUE GIRLS' ACADEMY ABSCONDING PROCEDURES

At Belle Vue Girls' Academy, we actively work to provide a secure, safe environment where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community.

Role and Responsibilities

- a) The Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for all decisions made when a child absconds from school.
- b) All staff are responsible for caring for the child (until the child leaves the premises). They will be responsible for seeking additional help if this is felt necessary.
- c) Parents/carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school. They are responsible for encouraging their children to keep to all school procedures and policies.
- d) Once school has informed parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with the subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming to school to help secure the safety of the child or working with the school to agree subsequent actions.

Procedures

Where a pupil marked present is found to be absent from school without authorisation, the following safeguarding procedures must be followed:

1. The member of staff who identifies the pupil as missing informs the Pastoral Manager/Student Services via the Class Charts alert.
2. The Pastoral Manager organises an initial search of the school buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
3. If the pupil is not found, staff will complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds. CCTV may also be utilised in the search.
4. If the pupil is still not found, consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff knowledge of the child, the levels of risk, any active risk assessment and on what action is in the child's best interests.
5. A member of staff will immediately contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation. If the pupil has a mobile phone, parents will be asked to contact their child to ensure their safety.
6. If the pupil has still not been located then depending on the age and level of vulnerability of the child, the police may be informed.¹
7. Any staff who leave school grounds will take a mobile phone to maintain contact with school. Where possible, staff who leave the site will be accompanied by another member of staff.
8. Once a pupil has been found, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future. Parents and the Police (if necessary) will be updated and CPOMS will be used to make a record of the incident.

Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Staff will follow the pupil to the perimeter fence or gate and try to persuade the student to stay in school. De-escalation techniques will be attempted in order to support the pupil in returning to school. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm as possible and follow procedures.
2. If a student is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people then staff may need to physically intervene by adhering to the Positive Handling Strategies as per Team Teach training.
3. Staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting them at risk (e.g. running into a busy road). Where they are not in danger, this means that it may be more appropriate to monitor the student from a distance or through the use of CCTV where available.
4. If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school, the Pastoral Manager must be contacted immediately so they can act as the lead person in directing the course of action.
5. Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.
6. The lead member of staff may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to maintain communication with school.
7. If the searching staff lose sight of, or are concerned for the safety of the student or themselves, they must contact the Lead Pastoral Manager/SLT giving current details of their location and a description of the pupil.
8. A member of staff must then contact the pupil's parents/carers immediately. Depending on the age and level of vulnerability of the child, the police may be informed.ⁱⁱ
9. If the pupil has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and are no longer visible then the lead member of staff will make a decision as to how to take matters further. This will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.
10. Following an incident of this type, an Individual Pupil Risk Assessment will be put in place by the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Pastoral Manager and/or SENDCO to support the child. This will be agreed with parents and shared with staff with the intention of reducing risk of reoccurrence. This may include the creation of a pupil specific 'grab bag' which contains first aid resources, pupil's contact details, school phone etc, if it is felt there is a chance of the child absconding again.

i & ii: West Yorkshire Police - Truancy Policy Summary.

- Where a person is reported to have left school premises without the permission of staff at that location, or failed to attend at school as planned, they will not be recorded as a missing person or require a police deployment unless either a) or b) applies:
 - a) It is considered that there is an **immediate and real risk** that the child will suffer significant harm or cause significant harm to another person if they are not found.
 - b) Where there is an agreement in place between the school and the police that the young person should be treated as missing immediately in all circumstances.

-
- An immediate and real risk is one that is present at that time and not a risk which may arise at some point in the future.
 - The risk is not just of any harm. It must be of **significant harm**. Significant harm could be from violence or some other cause, such as sexual offending or self-harm.
 - The risk can arise due to risk posed to the young person by others, or a risk they pose to themselves such as self-harm or suicide.
 - When assessing risk, account must be taken of all the circumstances. Those circumstances may include the young person's age, any other vulnerabilities or disabilities and their mental health.
 - Where concerns about the young person relate more to their long term behaviour, care or home environment it is unlikely that an 'immediate and real risk' will arise.

The information that establishes the risk may come from any source. Sources may include school staff, parents, and police information