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Date of next review: September 2022

Responsible Persons: Assistant Vice Principal and Attendance Coordinator

Attendance Policy

The staff with lead responsibility for attendance within the academy are:

- Mr B. Stevens – Assistant Vice Principal
- Mrs C. Goundrill – Attendance Coordinator

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1. Aims and purpose

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential.

The Boulevard Academy believes that regular attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise and achieve their full potential whilst making a positive contribution to their community.

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement at GCSE level, with poor attenders much less likely to achieve five good passes at GCSE, including English and Maths.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021, we recognise that Children Missing Education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The Boulevard Academy will:

- Value all students
- Develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Encourage parents/carers to play an active role in resolving attendance issues
- Work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- Reward good attendance and punctuality
- Set targets for improvement in attendance

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of Academy improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Bullying, Behaviour and SEND.

General principles

Parents and carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Boulevard Academy believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of academy staff, trustees, parents, students and the wider school community.

4.1 The trustees will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
- Regularly review the academy's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that all attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree academy attendance targets and link these to performance management within the academy
- Monitor the academy's attendance and related issues through half-termly reporting at Board Meetings
- Ensure that the academy has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used effectively to devise interventions and solutions

4.2 The Principal will be responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4.3 The attendance team will:

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Take calls and MyEds from parents and record them on the necessary system
- Report concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Work with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advise the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Promote attendance across the academy
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to identify and address issues

4.4 The academy staff will:

- Be responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting necessary information to the attendance team
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with students and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole academy ethos which reinforces good attendance e.g. good teaching and learning experiences that encourage students to attend and achieve
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England 2016 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Report the academy attendance and related issues through half-termly reporting to the trustees
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used and record outcomes should legal proceedings be instigated

4.5 Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the academy before 8.30am if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, for every day of absence.
- Try to avoid making medical appointments during school hours
- Ask the academy for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the academy by taking every opportunity to become involved in their child's education; form a positive relationship with the academy and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home

- Encourage routine at home e.g. bedtimes, preparing uniform and kit the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances, send a written leave request to the Principal in good time.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The initial of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.20am on each school day. This has been revised currently due to COVID restrictions and is dependent on the year group.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 8.45am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

5.2 Categorising Absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the Principal and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents must advise the academy by telephone before 8.30 am for every day their child is absent from school with an expected date of return.

5.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). This should be done via telephone in the first instance, but if necessary a MyEd message can be used. If a MyEd message is used then a call back from the academy attendance team will take place. If your child is absent from the academy, we fully expect contact to take place between us and the parent.

Illness - We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Principal to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription, doctors note or other form of appropriate evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Medical/Dental Appointments – Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Parents must show the appointment card to the school.

If an out of school appointment time is not possible, in order to minimise the loss in regards to learning time, please allow your child to attend school as normal, leave to attend any appointment and return afterwards.

Other Authorised Circumstances – This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement.

Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Principal. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted.

If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, then we will act to contact parents directly via telephone or home visits. On some occasions we will liaise with the Local Authority to support us in contacting parents. If continued lack of contact with the Academy attendance team continues then the academy may take the student off the academy's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2016. This means that the child will lose their place at the academy.

Religious Observance – The Boulevard Academy acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration by written request by the parent of authorised absence. Such absence will be authorised up to a maximum of 2 days annually.

Traveller Absence – It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other students, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

5.5 Lateness and punctuality

The am register will be taken at 8.30am, and students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The morning absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a student is up to 30 minutes then they will be issued with a 30-minute detention, if any later then this will increase to an hour detention, both will be expected to be sat on the same afternoon.

5.6 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by calling or completing home visits (where necessary)
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

5.7 Deletions from the Register:

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, students can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- In custody for more than four months
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the school has tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after the school has tried to locate the student
- Death of a student

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion.

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Principal.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include, but are not limited to:

- A student's/family birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Having hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for holiday/training day
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the academy will always request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrates' court.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.3 and 5.4 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

6.1 Reducing persistent absence

The procedures we have in place for targeting unauthorised absences are:

- Calls home
- Meetings with parents/carers
- Home visits
- Letters and MyEd messages
- Attendance support plans

6.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

A member of the attendance team will provide weekly attendance data for each tutor group and termly reports to identify any student whose attendance falls below expectations.

Letters and/or MyEds will be sent to parents with their child's attendance report to highlight the academy's concern and offer to support parents to address this.

The academy recognises that poor attendance may be an indication of difficulties in a child's life either at school or at home. Parents should make the academy aware of any change in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school. This will help the academy identify any additional support that may be required.

The Boulevard Academy also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to gain good attendance, e.g. those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs and those children who are looked after.

The academy will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance which include:

- Discussion / meetings with parents and students
- Trustee attendance panels
- Revisit the Home School Agreement
- Referrals to support agencies
- Attendance plans

- Wellbeing support
- Rewards

Support offered to families will be centred on the child and planned in discussion with both parents and students. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the academy will use legal sanctions.

8. Attendance monitoring

The attendance team at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 5.3). If this absence spans over multiple days, the parent/carer is expected to call on each day.

If a parent/carer fails to inform the school of reasons for the child's absence then a member of the attendance team will contact the parent each day.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the trustees.

Our school collects attendance data using SIMS and this is used for internal purposes on a daily basis to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support

9. Legal Sanctions:

Penalty Notices - (The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2013) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the Principal
- A student has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve

A Penalty Notice gives each parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid with 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution – Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The academy will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by

the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Parenting Contracts – (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003), A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the attendance lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the trustees.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy
- Bullying 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day