

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by: Mrs. Catherine Harris and Mr. Hoque
Date: March 2026

Next Review: March 2027



“Respect Your Achievements Now”

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Purpose and Rationale

R.Y.A.N Education Academy - Vocational Centre recognises that regular attendance is essential to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), achieve their full potential. This policy sets out the school's approach to promoting, supporting, and monitoring attendance for pupils aged 14-19, many of whom have previously experienced disrupted education or difficulty attending mainstream settings.

We are committed to providing a nurturing, flexible, and inclusive environment where every pupil feels safe, valued, and motivated to attend regularly.

SEND Attendance Context Statement

R.Y.A.N Education Academy - Vocational Centre recognises that many pupils have complex Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including autism, ADHD, anxiety, and previous experiences of disrupted education. As a result, attendance expectations are considered within the context of each pupil's individual needs and starting point.

While the school monitors attendance in line with national guidance, including the identification of persistent absence below 90%, progress in attendance from a pupil's baseline is often a more meaningful measure of success. The school therefore prioritises supportive and graduated approaches to improving attendance, working collaboratively with families, Local Authorities, and external professionals to remove barriers to attendance.

The school recognises that attendance levels in specialist SEND settings may differ from national averages due to the complex needs of pupils. For many pupils attending R.Y.A.N Education Academy - Vocational Centre, improved attendance compared with previous placements represents significant progress. The school

therefore measures success not only through overall attendance percentages but also through sustained improvements in engagement, wellbeing, and participation in education.

Where pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will work closely with the Local Authority and parents to ensure that appropriate provision continues to be delivered, even where attendance may be affected by the pupil's needs or wellbeing. Adjustments and support will be implemented in line with EHCP outcomes and statutory SEND guidance.

2. Statutory Framework

This policy complies with:

- Education Act 1996, Section 444
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Latest Update
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2024)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)

The school maintains accurate attendance records and reports attendance data as required by placing Local Authorities.

3. Aims and Objectives

- To support all pupils in developing consistent attendance habits.
- To identify and address barriers to attendance through early intervention and support.
- To provide a personalised and flexible curriculum that encourages engagement.
- To work collaboratively with parents, carers, and external agencies to ensure every pupil's needs are met.
- To promote a culture where attendance is understood as a shared responsibility.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance Lead - Deputy Headteacher / DSL (Mr Hoque)

- Monitors overall attendance and ensures compliance with statutory duties.
- Reviews attendance data weekly and liaises with the Local Authority as required.

- Monitors daily registers and follows up all absences promptly.
- Works with families to identify reasons for non-attendance.
- Coordinates support and intervention plans.
- Ensures attendance strategies align with EHCP outcomes.
- Liaises with professionals (e.g. CAMHS, Social Care, Early Help) to reduce barriers to attendance.

Parents / Carers:

- Ensure pupils attend regularly and punctually.
- Communicate with school regarding absences or barriers.

Pupils:

- Engage positively with school routines and report any difficulties affecting attendance.

5. Definition of Attendance and Registers

Morning registration: 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon registration: 1:35 p.m.

Registers close 30 minutes after the start of each session.

Absences are coded in line with DfE guidance.

Attendance below 90% triggers monitoring and support action.

The school attendance register is a legal document and is completed twice daily in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations.

6. Attendance Support and Early Intervention

Because many pupils at R.Y.A.N Education Academy - Vocational Centre have prior histories of school refusal or emotional-based non-attendance (EBNA), our approach prioritises understanding, flexibility, and trust-building.

Tiered Response:

1. Early Contact - Phone call home on first day of absence.
2. Pastoral Check-in - Discussion with pupil and family to understand barriers.
3. Personalised Attendance Support Plan (PASP) - Developed collaboratively with pupil, family, and SENCo.

4. Multi-Agency Support - Referral to Early Help, Education Welfare, or Therapeutic Services as required.

5. Reintegration and Review - Gradual reintroduction, with adjustments to timetable or support in line with EHCP.

7. Safeguarding and Attendance

The school recognises that poor attendance may be an indicator of safeguarding concerns. Where patterns of absence raise concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will review the case and take appropriate action in line with the school's safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance such as Keeping Children Safe in Education.

8. Flexibility and Reasonable Adjustments

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may require:

- Modified start/end times.
- Part-time or phased timetables (short-term).
- On-site or off-site vocational learning.
- Therapeutic support sessions during the school day.

These adjustments are temporary, regularly reviewed, and approved by the Headteacher and LA.

9. Celebrating and Encouraging Attendance

Positive attendance is celebrated through:

- Weekly recognition in assemblies.
- Certificates for improved attendance.
- Communication of success to parents/carers.
- Reinforcement through personalised reward systems linked to EHCP outcomes.

10. Persistent Absence and Escalation

If attendance drops below 85%, the Attendance Officer initiates an Attendance

Panel Meeting with the family, SENCo, and relevant professionals. A Personalised Attendance Support Plan (PASP) is reviewed fortnightly. If attendance does not improve, the school liaises with the Local Authority Inclusion Team to explore further statutory or welfare interventions.

11. Monitoring and Review

Attendance data is analysed termly to identify trends and evaluate interventions. The Headteacher reports attendance outcomes to the Proprietor and Local Authorities. This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

12. Links to Other Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Home-School Agreement

Appendix III: NEW ATTENDANCE CODES - Descriptions and Meanings

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|------|--|-----------------------------|
| / | 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. pupil 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 <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc.) | Authorised absence |

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| | appointments) | |
| 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 |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Untime-tabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced and partial enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| ~ | Pupil not yet on roll/off roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

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|---------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Present | Authorised Absence | Unauthorised Absence | Approved Education Activity (Present) | Not counted in possible attendances |
|---------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

Penalty Notice - Code of Conduct

This document is issued in compliance with the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007 and the Education Act 1996.

RATIONALE:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 (the Act), states that the parent of a child of compulsory school age has a legal duty to ensure that they receive an efficient full-time

education suitable to their child's age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs. Therefore, in order to ensure that parents comply with this duty, and to ensure that children and young people are able to maximise the opportunities available to them via regular attendance at school, Birmingham City Council (the Local Authority) will support schools to challenge irregular school attendance using the powers outlined in this Code of Conduct.

Section 444A of the Act states that, if it is believed that a child has failed to attend school regularly and the parent is therefore guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Act:

- a Penalty Notice may be issued for £80, if it is paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice;
- rising to £160, if it is paid after 21 days, but within 28 days of receipt; and
- non-payment will entitle the Local Authority to prosecute the parent for the original offence, under section 444(1) of the Act.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

1. Attendance: When:

- a pupil has had a minimum of 20 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months (not to include the period of school closure due to Covid-19 from 16th March 2020 to the start of the new academic year in September 2020.)
- a school or place of alternative educational provision has commenced the relevant local authority legal intervention process and
- despite that process being followed by the school, there has been little improvement in the pupil's attendance.

2. Unauthorised Leave in Term Time: When:

- a pupil has been taken on an unauthorised "leave of absence" from school or a place of alternative educational provision for minimum of 20 continuous sessions, or;
- a pupil has had a minimum of 12 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months (this can be a mixture of O, G and U codes, not to include the period of school closure due to Covid-19 from 16th March 2020 to the start of the new academic year in September 2020) and has then been taken on an unauthorised leave of absence from school or a place of alternative provision for a minimum 8 sessions (G codes); and
- the school or place of alternative educational provision have followed the relevant local authority legal intervention process, a penalty notice may be issued.

3. Excluded Child in a Public Place: When:

- a child of compulsory school age is excluded on disciplinary grounds, the parent of that child, provided they have been served with Notice under Section 104 of the act, must ensure that the child is not present in a public place during school hours during the first five days of that exclusion without reasonable justification. Where parents fail to ensure their child is not in a public place under these circumstances, a penalty notice may be issued.

Parents will receive a separate Penalty Notice for each child.

PROCEDURE FOR ISSUING OF PENALTY NOTICES:

- 1 The Local Authority will administer the issuing of Penalty Notices, in order to ensure the consistent application of the Code of Conduct across Birmingham and avoid duplicate Penalty Notices being issued.
- 2 The Local Authority will post Penalty Notices via first class post.
- 3 The Local Authority will record when and whether the relevant financial penalty imposed under a Penalty Notice is received.
- 4 If the financial penalty has not been paid within 28 calendar days of being issued, the Local Authority will seek to prosecute the person who has not paid under section 444(1) of the Act
- 5 Penalty Notices can only be issued to each parent of a child exhibiting the necessary levels of unauthorised absence once and, where appropriate, in respect of more than one child. If there are further unauthorised absences in relation to the same child, the Local Authority may issue a second penalty notice. Where a third occurrence of unauthorised absence occurs, the Local Authority may prosecute the parent, under sections 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Act.
- 6 The Local Authority may, in cases of high levels of unauthorised absence including where unauthorised leave in term time of 30 school days or more has been taken, decide not to issue a Penalty Notice, but instead prosecute the parent under sections 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Act.
- 7 Penalty Notices will be issued to the parents of pupils who are attending maintained schools, academies, or places of alternative provision in Birmingham, whether they are resident in the city or not. The attendance of pupils who are resident in Birmingham but attending schools or places of alternative provision in

other local authorities' areas (except where those places are commissioned by Birmingham City Council) will be the responsibility of those local authorities.

Procedures for Withdrawing Penalty Notices:

A Penalty Notice may be withdrawn by the Local Authority in any case in which the Local Authority determines that:

- a) It ought not to have been issued; or
- b) It ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient.

Where a Penalty Notice has been withdrawn in accordance with the above:

- a 'Letter of Withdrawal' shall be given to the recipient;
- any financial penalty paid to clear that Penalty Notice shall be repaid to the person who paid it; and
- no prosecution under sections 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Act shall be continued or begun in connection with the same unauthorised absence period, against the recipient of the Notice of the Withdrawal.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

1. Arrangements for the payment of a Penalty Notice will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.
2. Penalty Notice payments received by the Local Authority will be used for the purposes of issuing and enforcing Penalty Notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.
3. Any sum not used for the purposes of the functions specified in paragraph 2 above, will be paid to the Secretary of State for Education.

School Attendance Policy

Step by Step Guide

Overview of Birmingham City Council's (BCC) school attendance policy, reflecting the latest statutory guidance and local enforcement practices as of August 2024:

1. "Support First" Attendance Framework

From 19 August 2024, BCC replaced the previous "Fast-track to Attendance" with a Support First framework—aligning with the national Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance. This emphasizes early intervention, partnership with schools, health, SEND services, and signposting to formal legal processes only if issues persist.

- *Schools engage families at the earliest sign of concern.*
 - *New mandatory letters and formal attendance contracts are used.*
 - *BCC provides templates for meetings (e.g., FAM, PF1/FAM follow-ups) and clear processes for legal escalation.*
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2. Leave of Absence (Previously "Term-Time Holiday")

- *Now termed Leave of Absence (Legal) Process, requiring Headteacher decisions based on exceptional circumstances.*
- *Any absence outside registered dates is marked unauthorised and referred to the Attendance Service.*
- *Penalty Notices are issued per child, per parent:*
 - *£80 if paid within 21 days.*
 - *£160 if paid within 28 days.*
 - *Second offence in 3 years incurs £160 directly; third leads to prosecution.*

Examples of non-exceptional leave:

- Cheaper holidays

3. Penalty Notice Framework & Fines

- *From 19 August 2024, national fine thresholds:*
 - *£80 (within 21 days) → £160 (up to 28 days) for unauthorised absence of 10+ sessions (5 days).*
- *Local application by Birmingham:*
 - *Leave of absence: same amounts apply; second within 3 years is £160 no-21-day discount.*

- *Parents can be prosecuted after a third offence or for particularly serious absence levels.*
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4. Registration Codes & Deletion from Roll

- *Schools must use updated DfE attendance codes and enforce consistent marking*
 - *Deletions from roll must follow updated regulations—notification to LA mandatory outside normal transitions.*
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5. Part-Time / Reduced Timetables

- *Part-time timetables must be notified to BCC from the start of the year.*
 - *Any non-attendance is recorded with code C2 .*
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6. Attendance Monitoring & Safeguarding

- *Schools follow Support First, escalating as needed through Family Support Services (FSS) and Birmingham Children’s Trust.*
 - *Concerns around illness or mental health are part of early-stage support planning.*
 - *Persistent absenteeism (≥10%) triggers additional interventions. Some BCC schools define thresholds (e.g., U<90%) with letters, visits, and attendance-officer monitoring.*
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7. Impact & Safeguarding

- *Governors and trusts receive termly absence statistics.*
 - *Frequent absence is treated as a safeguarding concern.*
 - *BCC uses a joined-up approach with health, SEND, police, and legal teams .*
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Summary Table

| <i>Feature</i> | <i>Policy Detail</i> |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>Framework</i> | <i>Support First (from Aug 2024)</i> |
| <i>Leave of Absence</i> | <i>Exceptional only; standard fine process</i> |
| <i>Fines</i> | <i>£80 / £160; escalates to prosecution</i> |
| <i>Codes & Deletions</i> | <i>Must follow updated DfE/BCC code framework</i> |
| <i>Reduced Timetables</i> | <i>C2 code; must notify LA early</i> |
| <i>Monitoring</i> | <i>≥10% triggers alerts; weekly monitoring</i> |
| <i>Safeguarding Integration</i> | <i>Built into early interventions</i> |
