BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN & DUNKIRK METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Reviewed: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

Ratified by the FGB: 5/10/26

Signed……..Chair of Governors

Doing all the good that we can

We aspire for all our children to become confident, happy and caring individuals who achieve personal success and develop a love of learning and a life built upon our school values.

Boughton-under-Blean & Dunkirk is a Methodist Primary School and our Methodist values are at the heart of everything we do.

- Forgiveness
- Friendship
- Trust
- Justice
- Perseverance

These are then underpinned by our learning values.

- Communication
- Independence
- Aspiration
- Engagement

Our whole school ethos is built upon and guided by them. Every school policy is written with this in mind and implemented in way that reflects our vision of doing all the good that we can and developing children as life long learners.

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it'

Proverbs 22:6

Statement of Intent

Boughton-under-Blean and Dunkirk Methodist Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working together to improve school Attendance*; August 2024. Through our whole- school culture and ethos that values good attendance including;

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working together to improve school Attendance*; August 2024 and School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures; January 2015. This guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

It also refers to:

- School Census Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education; September 2025
- Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's Attendance guidance for Schools

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectation of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including;

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school had high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupil's individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting the pupil's needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Using fixed penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising Laura Jakob- Family Liaison Officer to do so
- Working with parents of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or when there are barriers to attendance that relate to a pupils needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The Attendance Officer responsible for Attendance

The Attendance Officer is responsible for;

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/ carers and external agencies where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/ carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to headteacher
- Working with Kent PRU and Attendance Service; KPAS Attendance officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated staff member responsible for attendance is; Laura Jakob, and can be contacted via email; laura.dellys@bad.kent.sch.uk

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office as soon as possible after the registers have been taken for both morning and afternoon sessions.

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the attendance officer where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every [day/timetabled session] on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance/ parenting contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Laura Jakob; Family liaison officer, who can be contacted via telephone; 01227 751431 or email; laura.dellys@bad.kent.sch.uk

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register; SIMS and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and once at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

See **Appendix 1** for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.40am and ends at 3.15pm. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am. After this time any pupil arriving at school will be marked as late; L code, any child arriving after 9.15am will be marked as unauthorised; U code. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1pm.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling or emailing the school office, who can be contacted via telephone; 01227 751431 or email; office@bad.kent.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription,

appointment card or other appropriate form of 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence
Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done by either emailing the school office or completing an absence request from, obtained from the school office.
However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality
A pupil who arrives late:

- After the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After 9.15am marked as unauthorised, using the appropriate code

Ongoing punctuality issues are addressed firstly with a letter home to parents, if punctuality continues to cause concern, we may invite parents into the school to explore how issues can be resolved. This may include using support for external agencies. If punctuality issues are not resolved, this may lead to a Penalty Notice(s) being issued.

Following up unexplained absence
Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Kent PRU and Attendance Service; KPAS Attendance Officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school may request a statutory attendance intervention, which may lead to attendance prosecution.

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy previously) about their child's attendance and absence levels twice yearly in written reports, alongside this parents will receive an attendance report at the end of each seasonal term.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define '**exceptional circumstances**' are:

- Rare
- Significant
- Unavoidable
- Short

An absence might be considered unavoidable if the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Once a child has been absent without permission, the absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), KPAS or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with KPAS before doing so and send a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence; including late after the registers close, in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days. A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first

penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Strategies for promoting attendance

Whole school attendance is promoted at the end of every week during celebration assembly. The attendance notice board is updated weekly, with the classes who have the best punctuality and attendance. Alongside this, parents are notified in the weekly school newsletter of the current whole school attendance percentage, as well as which class has had the best attendance and punctuality.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school/ Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

We have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence. It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This will include ensuring that the pupil is supported to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The school will make arrangements to meet the requirements of pupils with additional educational needs or an Education Health Care Plan. Arrangements are specific to the individual child and will support them in returning to school, so that they settle into school. Some arrangements may include; later starts or earlier finishes. We will work alongside external agencies and the Local Authority to remove in-school barriers to attendance.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Attendance monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.
Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE.
The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.
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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.
Analysing attendance
The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The attendance officer has termly attendance meetings with Senior Leaders to discuss individual pupils and their attendance. Attendance statistics are discussed, and relevant attendance reports are shared with key staff to aid discussions with families. Best practice ideas are discussed, and data is used to understand the impact of interventions. Termly patterns of attendance are recorded and shared with senior leaders including

- Whole school and individual pupil basis
- Groups e.g. FSM, SEN, PP, CiC, GRT, EAL
- How we compare with national data.

Daily statistics are shared with the DfE via Wonde

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.
The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Hold attendance improvement meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary
- Closely monitor those pupils with persistent or serve absence. Make parents aware of the absence and expectations of the school, Local Authority and Government when it comes to attendance. Invite parents to meetings to identify barriers for not attending school, look for ways of support the parents and pupil to attend school.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum one year by Laura Jakob; Family Liaison Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy; Education Exemplar Policy - Schools (bad.kent.sch.uk)
- Behaviour policy; behaviour-policy-2025.pdf (bad.kent.sch.uk)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays