

**IGS Operational Guidance: Attendance**

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|  | Position/Committee  | Date  |
|  Prepared by   | Simon Ford (Deputy Headteacher – Behaviour and Attitudes)  |  October 2024 |
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**ILKLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Moorlands Learning Trust Attendance Policy which is available on the Moorlands Learning Trust Website [here](https://www.moorlandslearningtrust.co.uk/about-moorlands-learning-trust/trust-policies/).

# ATTENDANCE AT ILKLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

* Our expectations for attendance are high and it is an expectation that all students attend school regularly and punctually. The whole school target for attendance is above 97%.
* We will work closely with parents and students to maximise their attendance at Ilkley Grammar School.
* Where attendance falls below 90%, students are classed as Persistent Absentees and this will trigger further specialist action and interventions depending on circumstances. Students with attendance below 50% are classed as Severely Absent and this will trigger significant additional actions to improve attendance.
* Attendance is analysed in the following categories:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| % Attendance  | Category |
| 99%+  | Excellent |
| 97%-8%= | Very good |
| 95-%-96% | Average |
| Below 95% - >90% | Needs to improve |
| Below 90% | Persistently Absent |
| Below 50  | Severely Absent |

* Ilkley Grammar School uses the following graphic as a simple reference point for students and parents in order to promote good attendance to contextualise attendance in terms of the number of school days missed:



* Each Tracking document also has a student’s school and lesson attendance clearly marked. A parent can routinely check their child’s attendance using the Edulink app



**Government guidelines to support attendance**

The school has a number of intervention strategies to support students to attend as regularly as possible. The Government guidelines mandate schools to monitor attendance closely and where it falls short of expectations then a sequence of Attendance Warning letters is triggered when students are approaching being persistently absent or have 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence. Unauthorised lateness is included in this calculation.

A further stage 2 process is triggered if a student has 20 Unauthorised Absences in a 10-week rolling period. Should there be no tangible improvement in attendance after the warning letters are sent, the school will refer the parent to Bradford MDC for a legal process to start which can culminate in a fixed penalty fine or appearance at Magistrates Court.

## 1 - Categorising absence

Parents must advise the school using the Edulink app on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return where possible. Regular updates are useful if the child is off for any period of time exceeding one day. For extended absence, the child’s Head of Year can be contacted to arrange a meeting with parents to plan support to get their child back into school and to organise catch-up work (NB: as an iPad school, resources and work are typically uploaded to Showbie in line with the planned curriculum).

We request that parents will:

* Contact the school using the Edulink app by 8.30am if their child is absent on the first day of absence, informing us of the reason why and the expected date of return
* Continue to inform the school on any other subsequent day of absence after the first day
* Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours, o, if there are no alternatives, later in the morning and afternoon to allow the child to attend registration and maximise lesson attendance
* Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
* Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child’s attendance
* Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time unless this is absolutely unavoidable, and there are exceptional circumstances. In these cases, parents are asked to send a leave of absence request to the school in good time using the green form available from the Attendance Officer or Head of Year. Family holidays will not be authorised.

**2 - Using Attendance Data**  Students’ attendance will be monitored and may be shared with other agencies if a student’s attendance is a cause for concern.  Attendance data will be used by pastoral and SEND leaders to target specific interventions to support groups of individuals where attendance is becoming a concern. Progress and Experience Leaders will use progress and attendance data to coordinate interventions for cohorts within their year group following data collection points.

## 3 – Pastoral Support Systems to promote attendance

Ilkley Grammar School recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child’s life. This may be related to problems external to school or within school. Parents should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and/or behaviour in school. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Ilkley Grammar School also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies used will include:

* Regular assemblies to promote good attendance
* Regular Parent/Carer Bulletin articles to promote good attendance
* A regular update of attendance with every tracking and school report
* Discussion with students where attendance is a cause for concern
* Phone calls home
* Head of Year and Families and Outreach Specialist home visits
* Parental attendance meetings
* A sequential array of warning letters to inform and support parents to get children into school (see appendix)
* Attendance Challenges
* Reintegration support packages
* Intervention by the safeguarding team when attendance becomes a concern to the welfare of the child
* Referral to the counselling and social prescribing service

## 4 - Legal Sanctions\*

We would want to avoid the use of Penalty Notices, but they will be considered when necessary. The school works closely with Bradford MDC educational social work service, who will issue the penalty notices where necessary on behalf of Ilkley Grammar School. This may be considered in the following circumstances:

* If a student is absent from school for a long period of time without explanation or is approaching or below 90% attendance or for more than 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence.

* If a student has accrued 10 or more unauthorised absences (which includes unauthorised lateness) in a rolling ten-week period then a sequence of **stage 1 warning letters** including a notice to improve letter will be issued. If there is no tangible improvement, then the school will refer the case to Bradford MDC for consideration of a fixed penalty notice.
* If a student has accrued 20 or more unauthorised absences (which includes unauthorised lateness) in a rolling ten-week period then a sequence of **stage 2 warning letters** including a notice to improve letter will be issued by the school via Bradford MDC. The student will also be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer at BMDC. If there is no tangible improvement, then the school will refer the case to Bradford MDC for consideration of a fixed penalty notice or a more formal legal process.

A Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent per child. (it is currently £80 fine, which increases to £120 if not paid within 21 days). Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.  Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Bradford Metropolitan District Council’s Penalty Notice Protocol.

**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 school 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.

Information relating to Penalty Notices for attendance can be found at <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/education-safeguarding/attendance/penalty-notices>

### Appendix 4 Example Attendance WARNING Letters

**Stage One - Warning Letter One:**

<Address > 

<Address>

<Address>

<Date>

Dear <Name of Parent>

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. We then issue a first Letter to register our concern with parents. We are therefore writing to you due to <Name of pupil>’s current level of attendance:

Attendance <current attendance> %

Authorised Absence <current AA> %

Unauthorised Absence <current UA> %

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child’s future progression.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Excellent attendance! These children will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Children will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Children who take a 2-week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

90% and below: 19 days + absence a year

The Government classes children in this group as “Persistent Absentees”, and it will be almost impossible for them to keep up with work. Parents of children in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by Bradford Council.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance, please do not hesitate to contact <named school person> on <telephone number>

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Barton Mr A Calvert

Attendance Officer Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding and Attendance

**Stage One - Warning Letter Two:**



<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address> <Date >

Dear <name of parent / carer>

Since we wrote to you on <date of 1st letter>, <name of pupil>’s attendance has failed to improve significantly and is now <attendance percentage>%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year – your child will spend more time at home than at school this academic year!

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. It is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits of attendance forming with <name of pupil>. Poor attendance habits now will make it increasingly difficult for you to ensure your child attends school regularly as they get older.

We wish to help <name of pupil> to improve <his/her> attendance. I would like you to attend a meeting in school with me on <date> at <time> to discuss what we can all do to help <name of pupil> attend more regularly.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange another time and date to meet.

We would appreciate your support to make sure <name of child>’s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and may refer your child’s absence to Bradford Council for consideration of a fixed penalty notice fine or legal action if unauthorised absence continues to occur.

 Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

 Mr A Calvert

Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding and Attendance**Stage Two – Warning Letter One / Enforcement Letter One:**



<Address>

<Address>

<Address> *<Date >*

Dear *<Name of Parent>*

**Name of Child: *<name of pupil>* DOB: <date of birth>**

**Attendance Percentage: *<attendance percentage>***%.

Regular attendance at school is a major focus for the Department for Education (DFE) and Bradford Council. In an effort to improve pupil’s school attendance, schools and the council work together to challenge parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly without any known justifiable cause.

*<name of pupil>*’s attendance this academic year is currently *<attendance percentage>*%. This is considerably below what our school, the government and Bradford Council considers to be a level of attendance recommended for children to achieve their educational potential. Please note that parents are advised to provide an explanation for their child’s absence. Absences through illness will no longer be authorised without medical evidence, for example a letter from your doctor, a copy of your child’s prescription or an appointment card.

I will be monitoring your child’s attendance for the next 3 weeks. Should there be any further unauthorised absences I will invite you to an Attendance Panel Meeting. It is the Headteacher’s decision as to whether to accept any parental explanation for absence. Please be aware that pupils arriving to school after the official close of registers will be marked as ‘unauthorised absent’ unless there are legitimate reasons for your child’s late arrival.

**Every day in school counts towards *<name of pupil>*’s future, and I thank you in advance for supporting <name of school> in ensuring excellent school attendance.**

If you are experiencing any difficulties, or do not understand aspects of this letter, please contact me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Calvert

Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding and Attendance

**Stage Two – Attendance Panel Meeting Invite / Enforcement Letter Two:**



<Address>

<Address>

<Address> *<Date >*

Dear *<Name of Parent>*

**Name of Child: *<name of* pupil> DOB: <date of birth>**

**Attendance Percentage: *<attendance percentage>***%.

You will recall that I wrote to you on <date of Enforcement Letter 1> regarding *<name of* pupil>’s poor attendance at school. I enclose a copy of <name of student>’s registration certificate, showing that since (date), <name of student> has had <number of unauthorised sessions> sessions of unauthorised absence. You will notice that further unauthorised absence has occurred.

Unfortunately, <name of pupils>’s attendance has failed to improve sufficiently. <name of student>’s current attendance is <attendance percentage>%. I am therefore inviting you to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting. The meeting is scheduled to take place at **<name of school>** on **<date>** at **<time>.** You will be asked to agree to an attendance contract to support <name of student>’s attendance at school. If you are unable to attend the meeting or require an interpreter, please contact me as soon as possible.

Absences through illness will no longer be authorised for your child without medical evidence, for example a letter from your doctor, a copy of your child’s prescription or an appointment card. It is your responsibility to ensure that you inform the school of any absences through illness and to provide the appropriate medical evidence.

I must remind you that it is a parent’s responsibility to ensure that their children receive an education. This is stated in Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act:

**"*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".***

**Should you be prosecuted for failure to ensure <name of student>’s regular attendance at school, you may be sentenced to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a 3-month custodial sentence**.

If you are experiencing any difficulties, or do not understand aspects of this letter please contact me on 01943608424.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Calvert

Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding and Attendance

**Stage Two – Enforcement Letter Two-A - Parent did not attend Attendance Panel Meeting:**



<Address>

<Address>

<Address> *<Date >*

Dear *<Name of Parent>*

**Name of Child: *<name of* pupil> DOB: <date of birth>**

**Attendance Percentage: *<attendance percentage>***%.

I am sorry you were unable to attend the Attendance Panel Meeting today. However, the importance of this meeting cannot be stressed enough as <name of pupil>’s school attendance continues to be irregular with many unauthorised absences. I enclose a copy of <his/her> registration certificate, which shows that <name of pupil> has attended <attendances made> out of a possible <sessions available> sessions at school; <unauthorised sessions> of which are classed as unauthorised absence.

The decision has therefore been taken to continue to monitor your child’s attendance until <date of review>. At that point your child’s attendance will be reviewed, and if they are still causing a concern, a decision will be made as to what further action will be taken.

The school may continue to unauthorise future absences unless medical evidence is provided. Medical evidence may include appointment cards, copies of prescriptions, letters from specialists etc.

I continue to be available to you to offer support regarding <name of pupil>’s school attendance, therefore please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss the situation further.

**Finally, I must remind you that the Education Act 1996 states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child regularly attends the school at which they are on roll. A failure to do this could result in legal action being taken by Bradford Council.**

Yours sincerely

Mr A Calvert

Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding and Attendance

**Stage Two – Final Warning Letter / Enforcement Letter Three:**



<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address> *<Date >*

Dear *<Name of Parent>*

**Name of Child: *<name of* pupil> DOB: <date of birth>**

**Attendance Percentage: *<attendance percentage>***%.

Despite previous attempts to improve <name of pupil>’s poor attendance at <name of school> I remain concerned at the level of unauthorised absence. I enclose a copy of <name of pupil>’s registration certificate, showing that since (date), <name of pupil> has had <unauthorised sessions> sessions of unauthorised absence. **You will be aware from previous contact from me that you are legally responsible for the regular attendance of your child at school.**

Following a thorough assessment of this case, the decision has been made to refer your child’s poor attendance to Bradford Council. Bradford Council will now conduct a criminal investigation and consider whether to instigate legal proceedings against you for an offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act:

“***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 Local Authority will be in contact with you shortly, and in the meantime, I would urge you to ensure your child attends school regularly. If you are experiencing any difficulties or you do not understand aspects of this letter, please contact me on 01943 608 424.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Calvert

Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding and Attendance

**Attendance Improvement Letter:**



Date

Dear Parent/Carer of <<ChosenName>> <<Surname>> <<reg>>

<<ChosenName>>’s current attendance is**: <<PercentageAttendance>>%**

We are writing to you to congratulate <<ChosenName>> on their attendance for this term.

<<ChosenName>>’s attendance is currently <<PercentageAttendance>>% and is a significant improvement on last term.

Of course, we understand that there may be times when students are unavoidably absent, but even short absences can have a detrimental effect on attendance and attainment.

We look forward to seeing <<ChosenName>>’s attendance being maintained to give them the best opportunity to succeed.

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Barton Mr A Calvert

Attendance Officer Head of Year Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding & Attendance

 Attendance Tiers with exemplar interventions

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Intervention Tier Level | Attendance % and days attended (per year)  | Attendance Descriptor | Key Actions |
| One | 100% to 97% | Very Good  | * **Positive attendance group**
* Statutory Attendance captured at registration and period 5.
* All lessons are routinely registered for safeguarding purposes and ‘on call system’ utilised if student not present.
* Focus of attendance team on am and pm registrations which are all logged on Arbor with appropriate codes.
* Scrutiny of daily attendance and first phone call (safeguarding check)
* Form Tutor aware of attendance of their whole group via attendance email
* Celebration of positive attendance or improvement at end of each half term.
* Monitor and praise by Form Tutor to get to as close to possible to 100% attendance
 |
| Two | 96.99%% to 92% | May Require Improvement | * **Moderate attendance group**
* An in-term holiday, an illness, or a known medical condition could all place a student into this tier
* Monitor and praise by form tutor to get to as close to possible to 100% attendance
* Form Tutor aware of individuals with falling or improving attendance and any cause for concern.
* Monitor and praise by form tutor to get to as close to possible to 100% attendance
* Attendance team alert to HOYs if attendance issue developing via regular fortnightly calendared meetings.
* Additional scrutiny of vulnerable student attendance and prioritisation for intervention
 |
| Three | 91.99% to 88% | Persistently Absent | * **Persistent Absence Prevent Group**
* Attendance issues caused by broken weeks and/or regular illness
* Attendance Challenge issued for a two-week challenge to improve attendance with reward draw for those that are successful.
* Bespoke warning letter 1 sent
* PA Parent/carer meeting arranging with attendance and year team to understand barriers to good attendance and formulate plan to resolve them.
* AHT Heads of Keystage 3 and 4 involved
* Families and Outreach Specialist Involved
 |
| Four | 87.99% to 80%  | Persistently Absent | * **Persistent Absence Recovery Group**
* Attendance issues caused by significant issues with broken week and or regular illness
* Bespoke warning letter 2 sent.
* PA Parent/Carer meeting arranging with attendance and year team (and safeguarding team if needed) to understand barriers to good attendance and formulate plan to resolve them.
* Member of Leadership Team allocated to support attendance
 |
| Five | 79.99% to 50.01% | Persistently Absent | * **Persistent Absent Engage Group**
* Attendance issues caused by significant issues with broken week and or regular illness
* Bespoke warning letter 3 sent for attendance notification order
* Safeguarding officer or Named Person allocated to work alongside HOY on improving attendance and meet regularly with the student and parent/carer and agree and record contract for improvement.
* Consideration for fixed penalty fine process through BMDC if Unauthorised Absence Threshold met
 |
| Six  | 50% to 40% | Severely Absent  | * **Severely Absent/ Entrenched PA group**
* Attendance issues caused by severe illness, school refusing and/or significant medical concerns
* Safeguarding officer or Named Person allocated to work alongside HOY on improving attendance and meet regularly with the student and parent/carer and agree and record contract for improvement.
 |
| Seven  | 39.99% to 10% | Severely Absent | * **Severe Absence/Entrenched PA recovery group**
* Consideration for alternative provision/curriculum for education if criteria met and all school interventions exhausted.
 |
| Eight  | 9.99% to 0% | Severely Absent | * **School refusal or significant health concerns group**
* Consideration for alternative provision for education if criteria met and all school interventions exhausted.
* Consideration for fixed penalty fine and legal process through BMDC.
 |