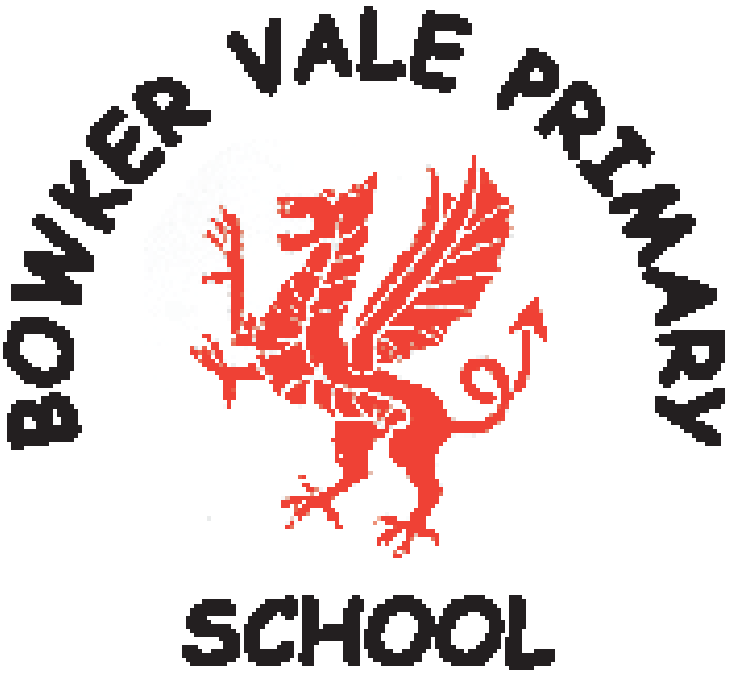
Bowker Vale Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Based on Manchester City Council model policy August 2026

Policy Updated	September 2026
Policy Agreed	To be agreed
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Owner	Jen Griffin

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1.0 Introduction

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

1.2 Bowker Vale Primary School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 Bowker Vale Primary School values all pupils. We will build strong, respectful relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance, and work in partnership to put the right support in place.

1.4 Bowker Vale Primary School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Attendance should not be viewed in isolation: it links closely with safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs and disabilities, mental and physical health, pastoral support, curriculum and inclusion.

1.5 This policy sets out our commitment to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026). Through our whole-school culture and ethos, we will:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promote good attendance and explain the benefits of regular attendance.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early when patterns of absence emerge.
- Build strong relationships with families and remove barriers to attendance through support and reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

We will also promote and support punctuality and ensure that attendance is everyone's responsibility across the school.

2.0 Legal Framework

2.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) and the national framework for attendance legal intervention.

The principal legislation and regulations relevant to this policy include:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996.
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002.
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended in 2024.
- The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations, as amended.
- The Equality Act 2010 and duties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

This policy should also be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

- Children missing education statutory guidance (2025).
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.
- Suspensions and permanent exclusions guidance.
- Providing remote education: non-statutory guidance.
- School Census guidance and DfE attendance data requirements.
- Manchester City Council's current attendance procedures, Code of Conduct and Statutory Action Escalation Pathway.

3.0 Safeguarding

3.1 Every pupil should be able to learn in a safe, caring and supportive environment and be protected from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and attendance is an important protective factor.

3.2 Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, repeated or prolonged absence, and children missing education can be warning signs of safeguarding concerns. Staff will respond promptly to unexplained absence and patterns of concern in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

3.3 Attendance information will be considered alongside other indicators of need or risk. The designated safeguarding lead and attendance staff will work closely together so that vulnerable pupils are identified early and appropriate support or safeguarding action is taken.

3.4 More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in Bowker Vale Primary School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.5 Parents and carers must provide the school with current contact details and more than one emergency contact number for their child. Bowker Vale prefers at least three emergency contacts where possible.

3.6 At least annually, the school will ask parents and carers to check and confirm the contact details held on record.

3.7 Parents and carers should inform the school of vulnerabilities or changes in home circumstances that may affect attendance or safeguarding, including private fostering arrangements.

4.0 Categorising Absence

4.1 The attendance register will be completed using the national attendance and absence codes. Where a pupil is absent, the register will show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

4.2 Only the school can grant a leave of absence or authorise an absence. Parents and carers cannot authorise absence themselves. The school will use the code that most accurately reflects the primary reason a pupil is not attending.

4.3 Parents and carers must telephone the school on the first day of absence, before 9.00 am, and on each subsequent day unless otherwise agreed, giving the reason for absence and the expected date of return. The school will follow up unexplained and unexpected absence promptly.

4.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

4.4.1 Illness.

Parents should notify the school on the first day their child is too ill to attend. Medical evidence will only be requested in a minority of cases, for example where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness or where prolonged or repeated illness means evidence would help the school understand needs, make reasonable adjustments or record the absence accurately. The school will not operate a blanket requirement for medical evidence.

4.4.2 Medical and Dental Appointments.

Where possible, appointments should be made outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for as much of the day as they reasonably can. Evidence of the appointment may be requested where appropriate.

4.4.3 Exceptional Circumstances and Leave of Absence.

Applications for leave of absence must be made in advance and will be considered individually on their merits. The school will not operate blanket policies that automatically grant leave. Holidays in term time will not normally be authorised.

4.4.4 Suspension or Permanent Exclusion.

Where no alternative provision has been made and the pupil remains on roll, the appropriate authorised absence code will be used. Alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day where the law requires it.

4.4.5 Religious Observance.

Bowker Vale Primary School recognises the multi-faith nature of British society. Authorised absence may be granted for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs, in accordance with the national attendance code.

4.4.6 Traveller Absence.

Traveller pupils are expected to attend as regularly and as frequently as possible. Further information is set out in Appendix 2.

4.4.7 Late Arrival.

Morning registration begins at 8.40 am. Pupils arriving after the register has started but before it closes will be recorded as late (code L). The morning register closes at 9.10 am, no more than 30 minutes after registration begins. Pupils arriving after the register closes will normally be recorded as absent using code U unless another absence code more accurately reflects the reason. Pupils arriving late must report to the school office.

4.4.8 Registers.

The attendance register will be taken at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils. The register will be kept open for no longer than 30 minutes in each session.

4.4.9 Unauthorised Absence.

Absence will be unauthorised where no satisfactory reason is provided, where the reason does not meet the criteria for authorised absence, or where leave has not been granted.

4.4.10 A full list of the Department for Education attendance and absence codes is included in Appendix 1.

Examples of reasons that would not normally justify authorised absence include birthdays, shopping, haircuts, oversleeping, a sibling's school closure, family holidays, or illness where the child is well enough to attend.

4.5 All requests for leave of absence during term time, including requests connected to holidays, will be responded to in writing. Retrospective requests will not normally be considered.

4.5.1 Where a pupil fails to return from leave or is otherwise absent and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education procedures before any decision is made about deletion from the admission register.

4.5.2 Where leave is not granted and the pupil is taken out of school, the absence will be unauthorised. The school may request legal intervention from Manchester City Council where appropriate and in line with the national framework and Manchester's Statutory Action Escalation Pathway.

4.6 Remote education does not count as attendance at school. Where a pupil is absent and receives remote education, the appropriate absence code will still be used. Remote education will only be considered as a last resort, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, and as part of a plan to support reintegration to school.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Bowker Vale Primary School believes that improved attendance is a shared responsibility of staff, governors, parents and carers, pupils and the wider school community.

5.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's ethos and policies.

- Ensuring school leaders fulfil statutory duties and have regard to DfE guidance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, challenging trends and helping leaders focus improvement efforts on pupils and cohorts who need them most.
- Monitoring attendance for the whole school and key cohorts, including pupils with a social worker, young carers, pupils with SEND or long-term health needs, disadvantaged pupils and any locally identified cohorts.
- Ensuring staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring attendance support and improvement are appropriately resourced and processes are adapted to individual pupil needs.

5.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff to monitor individual pupil attendance and the impact of strategies.
- Ensuring effective communication with Manchester City Council, parents and carers and other partners.
- Requesting statutory action in line with Manchester's Statutory Action Escalation Pathway, or authorising the Attendance Officer to do so.
- Ensuring appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are considered for pupils with SEND, disabilities or health needs.
- Following Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education protocol where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown.

5.3 Designated Senior Leader / Senior Attendance Champion

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jen Griffin and can be contacted via 0161 740 5993. The role includes:

- Leading attendance across the school and setting a clear vision for improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring attendance expectations and processes.
- Maintaining a strong oversight of attendance data and benchmarking.
- Identifying pupils and cohorts requiring support and devising appropriate strategies.
- Arranging calls and meetings with pupils and parents to understand barriers to attendance.
- Delivering or coordinating targeted support and ensuring systems for tackling absence are followed consistently.
- Working with local partners where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

5.4 Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is Assia Butt and can be contacted via 0161 740 5993. The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Benchmarking and monitoring attendance data to identify areas of focus.
- Providing regular attendance reports to staff and reporting concerns to the designated senior leader and headteacher.
- Working with Manchester City Council and other partners to tackle persistent and severe absence.
- Liaising with the headteacher or authorised senior leader where a request for statutory action may be appropriate.
- Maintaining accurate records of attendance support, contact and intervention.

5.5 Senior Mental Health Lead

The Senior Mental Health Lead is Rachel Jacques and can be contacted via 0161 740 5993. The role includes strategic oversight of the whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing, promoting pupils' health and wellbeing, and aligning attendance support with Manchester's Emotional Barriers to School Attendance (EBSA) pathway.

5.6 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for taking attendance accurately at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session using the correct codes and school procedures. The afternoon register will be taken at the same time for all registered pupils. Staff must report concerns or emerging patterns promptly.

5.7 School Admin Staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence and record the information on the school system.
- Follow up unexplained absence in line with the school's day-to-day attendance and safeguarding procedures.
- Refer parents and carers to the Attendance Officer or designated senior leader where more detailed support is required.

5.8 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school before 9.00 am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day unless otherwise agreed, giving the reason and expected return date.
- Provide more than one emergency contact number; Bowker Vale prefers at least three where possible.
- Arrange appointments outside the school day where possible.
- Engage with school support aimed at improving attendance and work with the school to remove barriers.
- Seek support where necessary by contacting Mrs Butt or Mrs Griffin.

5.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and arrive on time, and to speak to a trusted adult if something is making attendance difficult.

6.0 Attendance Data

6.1 Use of Attendance Data

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data regularly at individual, group and whole-school level, including half-termly, termly and annual reviews.
- Use DfE and local authority data, including View Your Education Data (VYED), to benchmark attendance against appropriate comparators.
- Identify pupils and cohorts whose attendance may be a cause for concern or is affecting achievement and wellbeing.
- Share appropriate information with the governing body and with Manchester City Council and other partners where required.

6.2 Analysing Attendance Data

- Analyse recent, historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence.
- Identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence before patterns become entrenched.
- Pay particular attention to key cohorts, including pupils with a social worker, young carers, pupils with SEND or disabilities, pupils with long-term medical conditions, disadvantaged pupils and any groups whose attendance is lower in the school's context.
- Use analysis to plan targeted support and evaluate its impact.

6.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

- Provide regular attendance information to class teachers and leaders to support conversations with pupils and families.
- Monitor and evaluate attendance interventions and adjust them where they are not having the intended effect.
- Work collaboratively with Manchester City Council and other relevant services when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

6.4 Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of possible sessions. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of possible sessions.

- Use data to identify patterns and trends promptly.
- Meet regularly with pupils and parents/carers where pupils are vulnerable, persistently absent or severely absent to understand barriers and agree actions.
- Provide or facilitate wider support services to remove barriers to attendance.
- Consider safeguarding concerns and act in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Intensify support as absence increases and work with the local authority and other partners as needed.

7.0 Support Systems

7.1 Poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties or trauma in a child's life. Parents and carers should make school aware of changes in circumstances that may affect attendance or behaviour. The school will listen to pupils and families and work collaboratively to identify the right support, including use of Manchester's EBSA resources where appropriate.

7.2 Some pupils are more likely to need additional attendance support, including pupils with SEND or disabilities, physical or mental health needs, pupils with a social worker, young carers, migrant and refugee pupils, disadvantaged pupils and children facing other significant barriers. High expectations will be maintained while support and processes are adapted to individual needs.

7.3 The school will use a graduated range of support and intervention, which may include:

- Discussion and problem-solving with pupils and parents/carers.
- Attendance plans, report cards or attendance contracts where appropriate.
- Early Help assessment and referrals to services such as Early Help Hubs or M-Thrive.
- Pupil voice activities and pastoral or friendship support.
- EBSA pathway resources and trauma-informed approaches.
- Reasonable adjustments for disability, SEND or health needs.
- Time-limited part-time timetables only in very exceptional circumstances and in the pupil's best interests, with a clear plan and regular review.
- Inclusion Strategy Toolkit and reintegration support packages.
- Legal intervention only where support has not worked, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate.

7.4 If a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan, Bowker Vale Primary School will communicate with Manchester City Council at an early stage where attendance falls or barriers relate to the pupil's needs, agree appropriate adjustments with parents where possible, and request review of the plan where needed.

7.5 Where parents or carers do not engage with support and unauthorised absence continues, Bowker Vale Primary School may consider formal support or legal intervention in line with the DfE national framework and Manchester City Council procedures.

8.0 Legal Sanctions

8.1 Bowker Vale Primary School will use legal intervention only where it is appropriate in the individual case. The school will consider the full range of support and formal interventions available, including attendance contracts, education supervision orders, prosecution, parenting orders and penalty notices, working with Manchester City Council as required.

Penalty Notices

8.2 Manchester City Council may issue a penalty notice for unauthorised absence where the statutory criteria are met and it is appropriate to do so.

8.3 For each individual case, the school will consider:

- Whether the national threshold has been met: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may be consecutive or sporadic and the 10 school weeks may span terms or school years.
- Whether a parent appears to be deliberately avoiding the threshold.
- Whether a penalty notice is likely to improve attendance and is the most appropriate tool.
- Whether support has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or whether support would not have been appropriate in the circumstances.
- Whether the Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustment duties, makes a penalty notice inappropriate.
- Whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the same parent for the same child within the previous three years.

8.4 A penalty notice can be issued to each parent who is liable for the offence, though it should usually be issued to the parent or parents who allowed the absence.

8.5 Payment is made directly to the local authority. If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may consider prosecution or withdrawal of the notice as permitted by law.

8.6 For a first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular child within a three-year period, the penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.

8.7 A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years is £160, payable within 28 days.

8.8 A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the first. If the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within that period, alternative action will be considered, which will often include prosecution or another attendance legal intervention.

Notice to Improve

8.9 Where the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, a Notice to Improve may be used as a final opportunity for the parent to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. Any Notice to Improve will follow Manchester City Council's current Code of Conduct and will set out the monitoring period, the support available, what improvement is expected and the consequences of insufficient improvement.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the Department for Education's current school attendance guidance and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where there is uncertainty, the school will refer to the current statutory guidance and regulations.

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 at a place other than at 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 registration	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – approved 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	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 (must be cleared at least weekly)
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

Appendix 2 – Traveller Family Absence

Section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996 contains a specific defence for certain Traveller parents where the family is engaged in a trade or business requiring travel and the child has made at least 200 attendances in the previous 12 months. This does not create a general exemption from school attendance.

When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to Bowker Vale Primary School, the expectation is that the child will attend full-time.

Bowker Vale Primary School will be regarded as the pupil's base school where it is the school they normally attend when not travelling and the relevant statutory criteria are met. Traveller pupils may, where appropriate, be dual registered at another school while travelling so that their base school place can be maintained.

Effective support depends on ongoing dialogue with Traveller families. Parents and carers should:

- Advise the school of forthcoming travelling patterns before travel takes place.
- Keep the school informed of proposed return dates and any changes.

The school will use the national attendance codes and statutory guidance when deciding how to record each session. Absence will only be authorised where the criteria for the relevant code are met. Where a pupil is known to be present at a site or home but is not attending education, the absence will be followed up in the same way as for any other pupil and appropriate support or statutory action may be considered.