

beYou Alternative Education Provision

Attendance, Absconding and Missing Pupil Policy



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Policy Control

Policy Title:	Attendance, Absconding and Missing Pupil Policy
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1. Mission statement

To empower young people with challenges by offering a supportive and personalised educational pathway that nurtures their strengths, builds their confidence, and equips them with the skills needed to thrive in life and work.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and wellbeing of all children.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

beYou will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets. We will work closely with pupils, parents, and schools to ensure a range of systems are in place to support attendance.

This policy will contain the procedures that beYou will use to work towards meeting its attendance targets, as set by the local authority.

2. Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents, carers and pupils.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them, both now and in the future; we will offer reward schemes for individual learners who have high levels of school attendance, no unauthorised absence and/or have shown to significantly improve their attendance rates.

We will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual pupils and assist to overcome any barriers that may be preventing the expected level of attendance. These strategies will be implemented jointly with the student's school to ensure the most appropriate support for the individual and their family.

The Student Commitment Statement will contain details of our expectations regarding pupil behaviour and attendance. These expectations and potential consequences of not meeting the expectations will be regularly communicated to parents throughout the academic year in various ways such as text messages, the school website, newsletters and at parents' evenings.

3. beYou Procedures

Staff will adhere to the provider school's attendance procedures and support attendance by making an initial phone call home/text message should a pupil fail to attend. Staff will speedily make the students school aware of any absences prior to 10:30am and do this via email or phone call. The school will document the attendance on their attendance system and add any notes and information provided to support the absence and reason for the absence. beYou Staff will record their own register and add details of absence/calls/meetings/actions/percentage of weekly attendance and level of attainment to support pupils and ensure a record of attendance is regularly maintained.

Any pupil who is absent from the provision at the registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or late, and be recorded by the beYou and the students School.

4. Punctuality and Absconding

Registration will take place at the start of provision at 10:00. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes from this start time. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U code) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In addition, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered (M code in this instance) by the school with responsibility/provider school. Parents and Pupils will be reminded of the importance of punctuality during the enrolment process to ensure a full understanding of the link between being on time, full access to learning and reducing anxieties around being late and feeling different to their peers.

The beYou Team will take the right and safest actions if a pupil leaves site without permission or does not return from lunch time break period. The aim to use the safest and quickest method of location and return of the pupil. The beYou Team will alert home and the best contact of the school with legal responsibility/school the pupil remains on role at the time. beYou Team will call parents/adults with parental responsibility and students' school to establish the whereabouts and locate the pupil to a safe place. A meeting of exploration must take place to ensure the pupil does not make this unsafe choice again and to ensure a safety plan/risk assessment is in place for the pupil.

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, e.g. those known to Children's Services or are looked after (LAC). The local authority's Education Welfare Service will be notified of unexplained absences of five days or more, which will be reduced to only 24 hours if the pupil is on the child protection register, who may conduct an unscheduled home visit to determine if the pupil is safe and well.

5. Absence notes and supporting evidence

Notes received from parents explaining the reason for the absence will be kept on file in line with school retention policies. Parents and carers are aware that only the head of provision or their representative can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter from a GP or consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

6. Medical and illness absences

beYou appreciates that there are times a pupil has to attend a medical appointment during the school day. In these instances, a copy of the hospital appointment letter should be provided to the Head of Provision **Prior** to appointment date to inform the school of the set scheduled time. This, however, does not apply to routine GP or dental appointments, which can and should be arranged for times outside of the school day.

If a pupil is repeatedly absent due to illness, the provision may request supporting evidence that the pupil is receiving the necessary medical treatment. An appointment card, consultant letter, photograph of prescription medication, would all suffice as medical evidence. Without the necessary evidence, the school may notify the parent or carer that all future absences will be unauthorised until the necessary medical evidence has been provided, and a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made.

7. Continuing and frequent absence

Within the provision it is the responsibility of all staff to monitor, support and share concerns around frequent absences.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, we will aim to resolve the problem as soon as possible. This may involve calls, meetings and creative incentives to boost attendance and explore any underlying reasons around the pupil's reason for not attending. In some cases, external support may be advised and a referral made. A plan to support may be implemented if thought beneficial to the pupil.

8. Persistent absence

If the pupil and family do not engage with the action plan, placement changes may be explored.

9. Absence related to discrimination

A pupil's absence from provision may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect, for example, ignoring a pupil or not talking to them. Some of this bullying may be discriminatory.

As an alternative education provider, we will monitor and report all discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for a pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, we will take action to deal with the situation. beYou staff observe pupils closely and ensure restorative conversations take place regularly. beYou staff ensure an open, transparent and positive culture to prevent instance of this nature.

10. Leave of absence/holidays in term time

Leave of absence during term time is actively discouraged as it negatively impacts on the pupil's ability to engage with the full curriculum. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from provision for a family holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

Any application for leave of absence will be considered by the students school; parents and carers must follow the schools procedure for applying for a leave of absence.

11. Reintegration

The provider will welcome back all pupils on return from an absence. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on their and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. Should the absence be linked to behaviour expectations such as a suspension or exclusion from learning, beYou staff will request a parent and pupil re-integration before on site return. This ensures a thorough reflection for the pupil, a safe space to explore the need for risk assessments/safety plans if appropriate and gives the pupil the right chance to move forward.

12. Roles and responsibilities

beYou Alternative Education Provision is aware that ensuring regular school attendance is a demanding area of work that depends on establishing and utilising close working relationships between parents, pupils, schools, the local authority and other professionals who work with children.

A key part of any successful working relationship is a clear understanding of each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities, and as such the following sets out to clarify the roles and responsibilities for those people engaged with tackling absence issues.

12.1 The Parent/Carer

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school, alternative provision or by elective home education (the parent can choose to provide education for their child).

A pupil's punctuality is also a legal requirement and parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late (after the close of the register) can also face legal proceedings. Sometimes, there are situations at home that may make it difficult for a pupil to arrive on time and as such due consideration is given to any help or assistance a family may need in these circumstances.

12.2 Alternative Education Provider (beYou)

beYou has a responsibility to ensure pupil attendance is effectively managed and supported. This begins with maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of attendance and absences. By closely monitoring attendance patterns, the programme can identify concerns such as frequent absences or tardiness and act quickly to address them.

Creating an engaging and supportive learning environment is central to encouraging consistent attendance. beYou works to motivate pupils by offering a programme tailored to their interests and needs, while also addressing any barriers to attendance, such as transportation challenges, family difficulties, or personal anxieties.

Communication is another key responsibility. The beYou team keeps parents, guardians, and referring schools informed about attendance expectations and promptly notifies them of any unexplained absences or concerns. This collaborative approach ensures that everyone involved in the pupil's education is aware and able to contribute to solutions.

When absences occur, beYou follows up with the necessary actions, such as phone calls, emails, or even home visits if required. The team works closely with pupils and their families to identify the root causes of non-attendance and implement strategies to overcome them.

Additionally, beYou ensures compliance with reporting obligations by providing regular updates on pupil attendance to referring schools and local education authorities. All actions are carried out in line with safeguarding policies and legal requirements, ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils.

Finally, supportive interventions are provided to help pupils re-engage with the programme. This could include mentoring, counselling, or offering flexible scheduling to meet individual needs. Recognising and rewarding good attendance is also an important part of the approach, as it encourages positive behaviour and reinforces the importance of regular participation.

12.3 The School with responsibility/School Pupil remains on roll

Schools are required under the Education Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important to support any statutory interventions that may be required. It should be noted that it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

The school has the responsibility to monitor individual attendance rates at least weekly and use their own intervention methods to tackle individual pupil attendance issues where the pupil's attendance rate is 86% and above. A referral to the Education Welfare Service should be made by the school when an individual's attendance falls to 85% or below over a six-week period and there is no exceptional reason for this (i.e. the majority of the absence is unauthorised). However, the school can refer a pupil to the Education Welfare Service should there be concerns for the individual's wellbeing with attendance above 85% or for Wellbeing Response Visits.

12.4 The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The principal function of the Education Welfare Service is to improve attendance in all schools and alternative education provisions across the local authority by supporting pupils and their families to overcome their barriers to engagement.

The service provides support to schools, pupils and their families to ensure regular attendance and address any difficulties relating to absenteeism. The Education Welfare Service works collaboratively with a range of support services and agencies and provides an essential link between home and school to ensure that pupils benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.

The service acts on behalf of the authority in its statutory enforcement capacity and is responsible for a number of related duties that include:

- the regulating and issuing of child employment and performance licenses for school age children and young people, and their chaperones;

- to investigate, locate and track children who are referred as "Children Missing from Education";
- to oversee the education needs of vulnerable pupils e.g. Gypsy Traveller families;
- to work in partnership with the Police in the arrangement and coordination of formal truancy operations in accordance with Crime and Disorder legislation.

12.6 Early Help Service

The LA Early Help Service will focus on working with young people and families to raise self-esteem, build confidence, support peer-to-peer working, to assist integration into education. The service will support a young person to overcome social and emotional barriers they are facing that are preventing them from fully engaging in school life and maybe limiting their attendance. Where appropriate families and pupils will be offered a range of support within this umbrella service and must consent to accepting help and support for this to be effective and implemented.

12.7 The Police and wider community

beYou staff may work with local policing teams and support services linked to the police to support absconding and missing pupils where appropriate. Staff will work alongside Policing Teams to keep pupils and the wider community safe and help prevent missing episodes and absconding. The police should be given names and known movement patterns of children known to be persistent non-attendees and, where appropriate their address.

beYou staff are aware that due to geographical location, the wider city centre community such as St Stephens shopping centre and other local businesses may provide locations, sightings and whereabouts of pupils missing or who regularly abscond placements

Where appropriate the British Transport Police are brought into discussions in respect of problems, involving pupils congregating on the rail network.

During Truancy Sweeps there may be occasional cases in which suspected truants refuse to comply. In such cases, if the police officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the child or young person is absent from school without authority, the power under section 16 and section 8 will enable the officer to use such reasonable force as is necessary in the circumstances. Similarly, once the child is returned to the Designated Central Location or School where the suspected truants refuse to comply, the police officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the child or young person is absent from school without authority, the power under section 117

of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 enables an officer to use such reasonable force as is necessary in the circumstances.

As part of the local authority's Code of Conduct for tackling non-attendance at school, Police are able to request an FPN be issued to a pupil's family if they are found in a public place during school hours (truanting).

13. Attendance initiatives

beYou, the school and local authority will work closely together to raise the awareness of school attendance, promote good attendance and tackle unauthorised absence.

beYou will use an awards system of their choice to reward pupils who have excellent or improving attendance. Any reward system must be meaningful to the children and the timing of rewards needs to be taken into account to ensure that the children can make the link between their attendance and any rewards.

14. Categorisation of absence by and recorded by school with legal responsibility

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

Unauthorised absence

These codes are for those sessions where pupils were absent and no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

Authorised absence

These codes are for those sessions where pupils are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid. Evidence may be requested to support the reason given (e.g. medical evidence, appointment cards, etc.)

Approved educational activity

These codes cover types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and/or the LA, where the session has been supervised by an approved tutor.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

15. Retention of records

Computer registers are preserved as electronic back-ups copies. Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule. beYou staff will adhere to attendance record recommendations.

16. Strategic Action Plan

The beYou Team may choose to implement an action plan to show how the team will set about achieving its attendance targets. This will include the support and aims for its vulnerable groups of learners, how it intends to close the gaps between the FSM and non FSM pupils' attendance, the operational management of attendance, the strategic management of attendance including the evaluation of impact of interventions etc.

APPENDIX 1

The registration system for school with legal responsibility and for beYou Alternative Education Provision recording purposes

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

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)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
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	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances

Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

APPENDIX 2

Legislation and guidance

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.

The Equalities Act 2010

Guidance documents relating to attendance

- KCSIE 2023

* Any evidence provided to support code usage must be retained by school