

# **BDAT ATTENDANCE STATEMENT**

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*'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old,  
they will not turn from it' - Proverbs 22:6*

## Contents Page

Item	Page number
Trust Policy Statement	3
Aims	3
Roles and Responsibilities	3-5
Absence	5-6
Links with Other Policies and Guidance	6
Monitoring Arrangements	6

## Trust Policy Statement

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) regards the excellent attendance of children as integral to the success of the pupils and thus the success of their academies. For the purpose of this statement, the term Trust refers to BDAT. The Trust is committed to ensuring that pupils and parents/carers understand the absolute importance of full attendance at our schools.

As part of our focus on diversity and inclusion, BDAT pledges that our policies will seek to promote equality, fairness, and respect for all staff and pupils. Each school within the BDAT Family is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all children and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

Our policies reflect the BDAT values of inclusion, compassion, aspiration, resilience, and excellence. By working closely with a range of stakeholders, such as our school, union, and HR colleagues, we have ensured that BDAT's policies do not unlawfully discriminate against anybody.

## Aims

This statement outlines the BDAT approach to attendance and the aims we have for our schools. As a Trust, our expectations of all of our schools are as follows:

- To provide an environment where all pupils feel safe, valued and welcome.
- To consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils, as we know that for a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.
- To ensure that attendance and punctuality is a key strategic priority.
- To use every opportunity to set high expectations for attendance and convey to the pupils and their families the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- To work in partnership with families and partner agencies to identify and remove any obstacles or barriers that interfere with high attendance in a prompt and timely manner.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Strong school attendance for every pupil is in everyone's best interests and at BDAT we believe it is the responsibility of us all. We are determined to work together to make this happen and recognise that this requires different input from all of our stakeholders, as detailed in the following section:

### Trust Board

The Trust Board monitor the Trust attendance figures on a regular basis (usually termly) and provide appropriate scrutiny to the Central Team and Academies within the Trust to assure themselves that the Trust's work is having a positive impact.

This is done through the Primary and Secondary Education Committee meetings where the respective Directors of Education present data on all aspects of education in each phase, including attendance and the impact of the strategy in each of our schools.

### **BDAT Central Team**

The BDAT Central Team contains members of staff fulfilling a range of different functions, many of which contribute to the wider aims in relation to pupil attendance. These include but are not limited to:

- Producing a BDAT Model Policy Template in line with DfE guidance that schools can adapt and adopt as their Attendance Policy.
- Ensuring that the Power BI system works effectively in providing our school leaders with robust data that allows them to monitor patterns and trends in attendance at their schools.
- Convening Attendance Professional Learning Communities in both Primary and Secondary phases so that good practice can be shared between school leaders.
- Providing support, guidance and challenge to school leaders to ensure that they are implementing the Trust attendance strategy effectively e.g. by conducting annual attendance audits and facilitating access to local and national attendance initiatives.
- Supporting schools by ensuring that they are aware of the latest national or local attendance guidance and examples of best practice.
- Representing the Trust at multi-agency events and sharing knowledge with school leaders.

### **School Leadership**

All of our schools are expected to ensure that attendance is a key strategic priority and is driven throughout the school community, led by the Headteacher and their senior leadership team. Further details and designated members of staff are detailed in each school's local Attendance Policy which can be found on their website.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Implementing safeguarding procedures to ascertain the whereabouts of any absent pupils to ensure they are safe and referring to partner agencies if necessary to do this.
- Adapting the BDAT Model Attendance Policy to their local context and implementing it for all pupils.
- Implementation of the Bradford Local Authority staged intervention approach to support attendance improvement for all pupils.
- Setting appropriate targets for attendance based on historical, local and national data.
- Discussing attendance at all levels of leadership to quality assure the impact of all staff members in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to the whole school strategy.
- Reviewing systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that they are making a positive impact on pupil attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance expectations, systems and procedures are communicated to families and pupils on a regular basis.
- Working in partnership with families and appropriate external agencies to remove any barriers to attendance
- Recognising and rewarding excellent or improving attendance

### **Local Governing Body**

Local Governing Bodies are expected to monitor the attendance data in their school at each meeting and provide appropriate scrutiny to the senior leadership team to assure themselves that the attendance strategy is having a positive impact.

### **Families**

Excellent attendance at school is the aspect of their child's education that parents have the most impact upon. This is why [Parental Responsibility Measures](#) are clear that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

We ask that all parents ensure that their children attend school punctually every day and avoid requesting any leave of absence unless it is the most exceptional of circumstances.

Further details of how parents can support their child's attendance at school, as well as information about local attendance procedures, can be found in the school's local Attendance Policy.

### **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to always attend school on time unless illness or an unavoidable circumstance prevents them from doing so.

## **Absence**

The Trust takes its duty to safeguard the welfare of all its pupils seriously. Pupils may be at risk of harm if they are not in school regularly, particularly where absences are unexplained and there is a lack of contact from families. In circumstances such as these, the Designated Safeguarding Lead in school may need to make referrals to external safeguarding partners (such as children's social care) in order to ensure that the child is safe.

Consequently, it is imperative that parents communicate effectively with their child's school in line with the procedures detailed in their individual school Attendance Policy. In all of our schools it is expected that we hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil in line with best practice and recommendations in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

At BDAT, it is also of paramount importance to us that our pupils are able to enjoy and participate fully in their education. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absences seriously affect learners' learning and progress over time, leading to poorer outcomes, which can inhibit life chances and opportunities.

Research shows a direct relationship between the attendance of learners and their outcomes at the end of both primary school and secondary school. Put simply, the more days a child goes to school, the better they do academically, behaviourally, socially and emotionally.

Taking this context into account, and in line with DfE and local authority guidance, leaves of absence during term time are not permitted unless the circumstances are exceptional. Family holidays are not regarded as an exceptional circumstance according to government guidance.

Decisions in relation to leave of absence are taken at individual school level by Headteachers but the Trust are supportive of these decisions, including where the Headteacher makes a referral to the local authority to implement more formal mechanisms such as penalty notices.

Further details around absence and related procedures are specific to each individual school and can be found in their local Attendance Policy available on the school website.

## Links with Other Policies and Guidance

School attendance is subject to various statutory legislation as well as guidance produced by the Department for Education. The BDAT Attendance Statement and BDAT Model Attendance Policy are written to reflect the following:

- [DFE Guidance on Parental Responsibility Measures](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Children Missing Education](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Suspensions and Exclusions](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Alternative Provision](#)
- [DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [DFE Guidance on Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)
- [DFE Summary Table of Responsibilities to Improve School Attendance](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [The European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

This Attendance Statement should also be read in conjunction with the following BDAT Policies:

- [BDAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)
- [BDAT Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy](#)
- [BDAT Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- [BDAT Behaviour Statement](#)
- Individual School Level Attendance Policies (found on their websites)

## Monitoring Arrangements

This BDAT Attendance Statement will be reviewed by the Trust Board annually, or earlier if guidance from the DfE or local authority is updated.