



**Yardleys**  
**School**  
**WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE**

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted by Trustees:

Signed: .....

Date: .....

This policy is reviewed annually by the Curriculum & Standards Committee

Review date: .....

## POLICY INFORMATION

Date of last review		Review period	Annual
Date ratified by governors	July 2024	Governors' committee responsible	C&S
Policy owner	Philip Buckley	SLT member responsible	Laura Yates
Date of next review	May 2025		

**Please note, this is a new policy that supersedes the previous attendance policy.**

### Dates of linked staff training (if applicable)

Date	Course title	Led by
September 2019	Boosting Attendance in your school	Creative Education
Ongoing	Changes to DfE attendance guidance disseminated on a regular basis to relevant colleagues	Philip Buckley
Half-termly	Attendance overviews by year and key student groups disseminated at HoY / SLT level	BYP
21/05/2024	Leading School Attendance Improvement Summit: Working together to implement change	Education Conferences UK

### EQUALITY AND GDPR

All Yardleys' policies should be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities and GDPR policies.

#### Statement of principle - Equality

We will take all possible steps to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, either directly or indirectly against any individual or group of individuals. When compiling, monitoring and reviewing the policy we will consider the likely impact on the promotion of all aspects of equality as described in the Equality Act 2010.

#### Statement of principle - GDPR

Yardleys School recognises the serious issues that can occur as a consequence in failing to protect an individual adult's or child's personal and sensitive data. These include emotional distress, physical safety, child protection, loss of assets, fraud and other criminal acts.

Yardleys School is therefore committed to the protection of all personal and sensitive data for which it holds responsibility as the Data Controller and the handling of such data in line with the data protection principles and the Data Protection Act (DPA)/GDPR.

## POLICY INTENT

At Yardleys School, the aims and intent of our attendance policy are those encapsulated in the Yardleys Charter; specifically, we aim to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students.
- Ensure academic excellence (all students achieve their academic potential).
- Ensure personal development (all students develop as people, including developing the characteristics necessary to thrive at school and beyond their time at Yardleys School).

At Yardleys School, we know that excellent attendance underpins the intent outlined above. Therefore, all staff and stakeholders should be committed to:

- Improving the overall attendance and punctuality of students at Yardleys School.
- Improving the overall attendance and punctuality of different student groups at Yardleys School.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all stakeholders in Yardleys School, including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school in order to establish barriers to attendance and the timely interventions necessary to support improved attendance.
- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service as well as other agencies and services associated with student attendance.

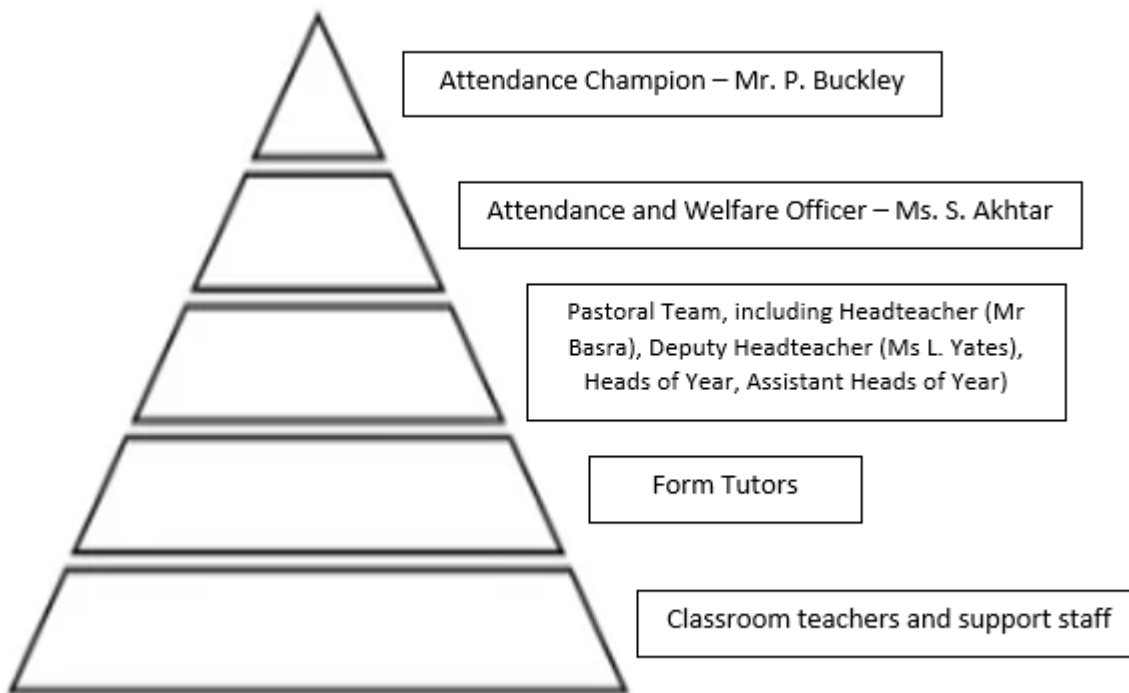
The importance of attendance in ensuring that every student fulfils their academic potential is shown in the table below. **Every day that a student is absent from school, they will miss at least five lessons that day.**

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons are missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Students are expected to attend school every day. **It is the responsibility of parent(s)/carer(s) to perform their legal duty by ensuring children who are registered at Yardleys School attend regularly (at least 97% of the time that the school is open) and punctually.**

Yardleys School endeavours to support parents/carers and students in this.

## Members of school staff who support attendance:



## EXPECTATIONS

### YARDLEYS SCHOOL IS COMMITTED TO:

- Promoting excellent attendance and reducing absence. We expect all students to be reaching an attendance target of at least 97%.
- Keeping regular and accurate records of each student's attendance and reporting this to the DfE. AM registers begin to be marked at 8:45am and PM registers are marked at 1:50pm. Registers are also taken every lesson within the first five minutes. Therefore, the AM register officially closes at 9.15am and the PM register at 1.55pm. Students will receive a late mark (L code) if they do not attend either session within the first five minutes and an absence mark (U code) if they attend either session 30 minutes or more after the session has begun.
- Acting immediately to work with families to address poor patterns of absence and punctuality, based upon current attendance data and in line with current legislation and guidance, i.e. Yardleys School's improvement efforts will be targeted at those students who need support the most. This includes contact by telephone on (at least) the first day of absence, home visits by a member of school staff, attendance meetings with students and parents / carers and signposting / referring for additional support. The school may also take the view that legal intervention is required to ensure attendance at school.
- Recognising good attendance in a variety of ways, including: recognition of good attendance by Form Tutors and Heads of Year, recognising good attendance on school reports, awarding attendance prizes and taking attendance into account when allocating places on rewards trips.

### STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Aim for 100% attendance, but attend no less than 97%. Students should be resilient and attend school everyday.
- Attend Yardleys School every day and on time.
- The school day starts at 8:40am and students are expected in school at this time. Students will be considered late if they arrive at their first lesson after 8.45am. Our AM register closes at 8.50am and our PM register closes at 1.55pm.
- Attend all lessons promptly.

## **PARENTS AND CARERS ARE EXPECTED TO:**

- Obey the Law. The Education Act (1996 & 2002) requires parents/carers to ensure that their child/children attend school on a regular basis. Non-compliance may result in legal action against parents/carers when they fail to cooperate with their legal obligation or attendance remains a cause for concern despite school interventions and action.
- Make sure that their children attend Yardleys School on time every day that the school is open. At Yardleys School we require all students to be reaching the attendance target of at least 97%.
- Make sure that their children arrive in the building at 8.40am each morning ready for school.
- Contact the school by telephone (Head of Year/Attendance Officer) on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence if their child is unable to attend for any reason, followed by a written note on return.
- Arrange medical appointments outside school time where possible.
- Ensure that no holidays are booked during term time. If parents / carers do need to request a leave of absence, this must be done via school reception on the school's Leave of Absence Request Form.
- Contact their child's Head of Year to discuss any concerns that they may have and which could affect their child's attendance.
- Ensure that the school has up to date contact details; we must have at least two contacts for each student, but we would recommend that parents provide four contacts per student.
- Where a student's attendance is below expectation or is a concern, provide documentary evidence of medical conditions that have an ongoing effect on attendance.

## **ABSENCE**

A student is classed as absent if they arrive to school after the register is closed or they do not attend for any reason. Absence from school disrupts the education of the individual and the whole class. Those children who do not attend regularly:

- Do not achieve well in exams
- Find it difficult to maintain friendships
- Are at more risk and makes them more vulnerable and more likely to be involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work.

Every half day absence from the school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of absence is required, preferably in writing.

## **AN AUTHORISED ABSENCE IS:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave (the school is not required to automatically authorise absence for sickness and may require medical evidence in order to do so).
- Medical, orthodontist or emergency dental appointments which fall unavoidably during the school day and the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observance for which school has granted leave (one day per academic year).

## **AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IS:**

- Parents keeping the children from attending the school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival to school after the register has been closed
- Leaving the school for no reason during the school day
- Looking after other children or birthdays
- Parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to the school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent and will also be recorded as unauthorised.
- When the school deems an illness not serious enough to warrant an authorised absence, for example, headaches, stomach pain, a mild cold, sore throat etc.

Please note, that the authorising of absence is at the behest of the Headteacher and as such an absence may be unauthorised even if contact is made with the school by parents / carers.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

The school, in line with government legislation, defines persistent absenteeism (PA) as missing 10% or more (90% or less attendance) of schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Whilst a child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any issues with regular attendance are best discussed between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is essential not to cover up their absence or give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives them the impression that attendance is not important and usually makes the issues worse.

## **SEVERE ABSENTEEISM (SA)**

The school, in line with government legislation and guidance, defines severe absenteeism (SA) as missing 50% or more (50% or less attendance) of schooling across the academic reason for whatever reason. Whilst a child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any issues with regular attendance are best discussed between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is essential not to cover up their absence or give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives them the impression that attendance is not important and usually makes the issues worse.

Both PA and SA will be taken very seriously by Yardleys School and a raft of measures may be utilised by the school, including:

- Contact with parents / carers by telephone, letter and text message.

- Attendance meetings with parents / carers to understand the support that the school can offer.
- Signposting parents / carers and students to external agencies.
- Referrals to external agencies, e.g. Early Help referrals to Birmingham Children's Trust.
- Utilising the National Framework for Penalty Notices when a holiday is taken during term time or when appropriate support is not successful or engaged with.

## **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school of a student absence and also to inform us of any changes to contact details.

Parents are asked to contact the school before 8:00am on EACH day that their child is absent, informing us of the reason for the absence and when their child will be returning back to school.

Failure to inform the school of an absence will result in contact from school to home, followed by a home visit if necessary.

## **WHO TO CONTACT IF YOUR CHILD IS OFF SCHOOL:**

Head of Year 7	Ms C James	0121 4645626
Head of Year 8	Mr. R. Vaughan	0121 4650671
Head of Year 9 / Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mr S Sohal	0121 4645638
Head of Year 10	Mr B Tilley	0121 4645627
Head of Year 11 / Whole School Attendance Champion	Mr P Buckley	0121 4645641
Attendance & Welfare Officer	Ms S Akhtar	0121 6750674
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ms S Mukadam	0121 4645648

## **MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

Parents / cares should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at the beginning or end of the school day. An appointment at the beginning of the school day should not result in a whole day's absence from school. If an unavoidable appointment requires the student to be collected during the school day, they must be collected by an adult listed on the student's record.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION**

Parents must inform the school in advance if an absence is required for religious observance. Please note, in line with government expectations, absence for religious observation will only be authorised for a single day on a day set apart by the religious body where absence from employment would be expected (e.g. Eid / Diwali).

## **LEAVE DURING TERM TIME (EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE)**

The Department for Education has amended the regulations and guidance in relation to absences in term-time. **There is no automatic right for a parent to take their child out of school during term time and we require parents to observe the term times set.**

Since September 2013, the Department for Education only allow the headteacher to grant a leave of absence if there are exceptional circumstances. In determining whether or not an absence in such

circumstances can be authorised, it is for the headteacher to determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Therefore, in the case of an unauthorised leave the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified and a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Any requests to leave during term time must be made in writing, using the Yardley School Leave of Absence Request Form (see appendix one). A leave of absence form can be collected from reception.

Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider some absences to be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their peers will receive. Children returning from an absence are unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other students in the class. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

## **ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION**

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor the attendance and punctuality of every student throughout the year. Amongst a raft of further interventions, the school will utilise:

- There may be daily phone-calls and unannounced home visits by the attendance officer/pastoral member of staff if attendance or punctuality are deemed to be a concern; in extreme circumstances, this home visit may be made by the police.
- Student attendance concern letters may be sent from the Attendance Officer, a Head of Year or member of the school's Senior Leadership Team; we expect parents to adhere to the advice offered in these communications.
- The school will seek to offer 'Early Help' support wherever possible. This works most effectively when parents and carers have open lines of communication with school, including initiating contact and providing school with an overview of how students are getting on outside of school.
- The school may liaise with other schools attended by siblings, in order to help establish familial barriers to attendance, as well as the correct interventions to support the family.

## **SUPPORT FOR PARENTS/CARERS AND/OR CHILDREN**

The school will regularly contact and communicate with parents where attendance is below expectations. The school will discuss any issues which may be a potential barrier to attendance, such as a medical problem, and will work with parents and carers to overcome these. Any such support from the school does not negate the parents' legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school.

## **LEGAL ACTION THAT MAY BE TAKEN INCLUDES:**

From the beginning of the 2024 – 2025 academic year, Yardleys School will follow the expectations set out in [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#), which can be found at: [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#).

**It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence. Unauthorised absence is a safeguarding issue as it places children at risk. Under education legislation, parents have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. Failure to do so, without reasonable excuse, may result in referrals to the Education Welfare Service with the prospect of fines or prosecution.**



## **Leave in Term Time (unauthorised holidays during term time) – fines and legal intervention**

- Yardleys School follow the guidance set out by the Department for Education and Birmingham City Council. Referrals to Birmingham City Council will be made for students who miss ten continuous sessions (equivalent to five days) of school due to a leave of absence during term time; such a referral is likely to lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and £80 or £160 fine for each parent per student, depending on how soon the payment is made.

## **Unsatisfactory attendance**

Yardleys School follow the guidance set out by the Department for Education and Birmingham City Council. The referral process to Birmingham City Council will be completed once interventions to address concerning levels of absence have not been effective and attendance to school continues to be a concern. If and when this process is utilised, the following potential outcomes should be noted:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. On the first occasion, the penalty is £80 or £160 depending on how soon the payment is made. If there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £640. Failure to pay may result in prosecution. If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first, the penalty will be £160 per parent, per student. Under the legislation highlighted above, a third penalty notice will no longer be issued, instead,
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) – court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Community Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) – court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Community Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

**Being taken to court could result in parents or carers having a criminal record.**

## **Public Health Guidance.**

At all times, Yardleys School will follow the attendance guidance set out by the DfE and Birmingham City Council with regards to public health announcements at a national or local level.