

# **Bede Academy**



# **Attendance Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

At Bede Academy students are taught the importance of achieving their “Personal Best”. This means that each student’s attitude and behaviour must be of the highest possible standard. As part of this, student attendance at Bede Academy is crucial if students are to flourish and reach the pinnacle of their potential. Students are expected to progress personally, morally and spiritually throughout their time at Bede Academy.

Whilst it is true that student attendance may vary due to personal circumstances which may be out of their control, it is of vital importance to repeatedly reinforce the benefits of full-time attendance. Students benefit greatly from the established routines of regular and sustained attendance at Bede Academy. Students who attend regularly settle well into peer groups and form strong, positive relationships with other students.

These relationships enable students to become more resilient and to develop patterns of self-discipline which serve them well as they grow up into adult life. They are able to demonstrate courage in being different to the surrounding and prevailing culture. Students learn to support each other and can demonstrate compassion for those around them who may need support. In addition, they are able to work effectively and efficiently with staff as they become more confident in relationships with adults.

A key purpose in life is to be educated for the future. Students obviously learn whilst in the academy in formal settings, but also continue to learn outside of the academy. In both circumstances students also rely on their peers for parts of their learning, whether by formal or informal collaboration. By being absent, students miss out on many learning opportunities and experiences from which they could benefit. In order to avoid this, Bede Academy has a range of support strategies and interventions which are detailed in this policy to ensure that all students, irrelevant of past experiences, are given every opportunity to regularly attend Bede Academy.

## 2. Responsibilities

Positive and consistent academy/home links are essential in maintaining high levels of attendance and combating poor levels of attendance.

### Students are expected:

- To attend the academy on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- To be appropriately prepared for the academy day and always strive to do their best.
- To inform a member of staff/form tutor if there is a reason which may prevent them from attending the academy.

### Parents are expected:

- To ensure that their child(ren) attend the academy regularly and are on time.
- To work with the academy to improve student attendance where necessary.
- To ensure that contact is made with the academy as soon as reasonably practicable whenever their child is unable to attend. Parents should inform the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of the student being absent, by telephoning the academy receptionist or sending a written reason for the absence to the academy.
- To provide their child(ren) with a written absence note explaining the reason for any absence on the day the student returns to the academy.
- To ensure that their child(ren) arrives at the academy well-prepared for the academy day and to support the completion of all homework by set deadlines.

- To contact the academy when situations other than illness arise that may hinder academy attendance or performance.
- To avoid taking holidays or medical appointments during term time. Parents will be reminded of the detrimental effect that such absences can have on a student's potential achievement.

**What parents and students can expect from the academy:**

- Clear policies and procedures for accurate recording, supporting and improving student attendance to the academy.
- Early contact with parents when a student fails to attend the academy without providing good reason.
- To put individual strategies in place to support attendance to help improve student attendance, working in partnership with parents. In serious cases of non-attendance this can mean issuing fixed penalty fines and making parents and students subject to fast track procedures for prosecution where appropriate with or without steps.
- Immediate action/support will be provided regarding any problem which is reported to the academy that is likely to hinder student attendance.
- Good attendance and performance is recognised and rewarded.
- Provide a good quality of education tailored to the needs of the individual student.

**3. Maintaining good attendance**

The academy's policy is that attendance rates should be no lower than 97% for any individual student and 97.5% for the academy overall.

To maintain good attendance, the academy carries out the following:

- Provision and delivery of an excellent education to students and ensuring that this is maintained.
- Continuous positive encouragement of students and parents.
- Ensure the attendance policy is understood by all staff, parents and students, through the provision of clear and concise information and training.
- Regular announcements of attendance records/percentages for individual tutor groups during morning assemblies and during tutor time to highlight the importance of good attendance to ensure this is maintained.
- Rewarding good attendance – at the end of each term students with 100% attendance will receive a certificate by the Principal during assembly. The tutor group with the highest attendance for the year will also receive a reward.
- Each week at Bede North, the tutor group with the highest attendance in each year group will receive an early lunch pass, as long as attendance is above 97%.
- At Bede North study files are distributed to all students, which must be completed by students and staff on a daily basis. The study file is designed to aid communication between the academy and parents, so each parent is aware of information regarding their child. For example, the study file is used to record homework tasks and any issues that have arisen during the academy day. Parents are encouraged to also use the study file to keep the academy informed of important information, such as issues with academy uniform or external appointments. Students are required to write in attendance totals weekly, when provided by tutors, and to track their progress.
- A Bede Academy Handbook is distributed to all parents.
- Letters are provided to parents throughout the academy year advising for example of parents' evenings, concerts, awards ceremonies and sporting events.
- Referrals will be made to external agencies such as Children's Services, EOTAS, and the Local Authority which involves interaction with, EWO, the medical team and Home Tutors to ensure the students are given specialist support and input where necessary.

- The academy has an appointed Attendance Officer at Bede North, and a part-time Attendance Officer at Bede South, whose primary responsibilities are to monitor and review the attendance of students and to ensure that everyone complies with the academy's attendance policy. This role will also help to maintain a link between the academy and parents, carrying out home visits where necessary to resolve any particular issues relating to attendance and punctuality.

### **Ensuring that attendance is monitored and measured**

Students' attendance is carefully monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the academy's Attendance Officer, who will report on a daily basis to the Vice Principal and the Pastoral Team at Bede North, and to the Principal (Primary Years) at Bede South.

Each individual student's attendance is recorded on a daily and lesson by lesson basis using the academy's Management Information Systems (Bromcom):

- Tutors input a mark for each individual student at morning and afternoon registration. The Attendance Officer will check which students are absent and this is then followed up by checking the reasons for absence and dealing with them appropriately.
- Subject teachers enter attendance/absence data for each student each lesson, throughout the day, which is monitored and appropriate intervention employed when necessary.

All letters that have been provided by parents to provide legitimate reasons for their child's absence will be given to the Attendance Officer who will treat the absence as an authorised absence and input the data on the system accordingly.

In the case of students who have gone home ill or have left for a medical appointment during the course of the day, staff members must inform the Attendance Officer who will note this on the system. This allows the teaching staff to access the information and monitor where students are during lesson times.

At the end of each week the Attendance Officer will then provide the relevant data and produce graphs for the Senior Leadership Team regarding attendance. They will then discuss the overall attendance for students at the academy, identifying any students with attendance issues and developing individual strategies for addressing this. The Vice Principal (Pastoral) and the Principal (Primary Years) will give authority to the Attendance Officer to take appropriate action in specific cases which require additional measures to be taken to address lack of attendance.

The attendance information at the end of each week is also submitted by the Attendance Officer to the Head of the Network department who will arrange for the information to be displayed on the academy's plasma screens located at various places around the academy for the benefit of students.

Graphical information is provided by the Attendance Officer at weekly, half-termly and year to date intervals and it is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure that the information is kept continuously up to date.

Where there are only a few unauthorised absences, the Attendance Officer will telephone the parents for an explanation of absence and carry out home visits where necessary. If there are more than 10 unauthorised absences on any one day, the Attendance Officer will use a text messaging service called ClarionCall Services to text message parents asking them to provide an explanation for their child being absent.

If parents do not make contact to confirm the reason for their child's absence and the academy is unsure of their whereabouts the academy will contact home and may conduct a home visit. The

Attendance Officer and a member of the Pastoral Team will visit the home address to ensure the safety of the child. In some circumstances, the Police may be contacted if there are concerns about the wellbeing of a child. If a student is absent for two consecutive days without the academy being informed of a reason, the Attendance Officer may conduct a home visit.

### **Notes for Parents**

#### **Why is daily attendance at the academy important?**

- From the earliest years your child needs to develop a responsible attitude to commitments and good habits (in the first instance for the academy and in later life for the world of work). Your support with this ensures your child understands that you value the academy and he/she will learn to value it too.
- Your child's progress and attainment will be greater.
- Your child's time at the academy will be more satisfying.
- Your child will feel more secure.
- Academy work is easier to cope with when there are no gaps in learning.

#### **What should I do if my child is ill?**

- You should contact the academy by telephone as soon as possible so that their absence can be provisionally authorised.

You should contact: Mrs J Burt (Attendance Officer - Secondary)  
Telephone: 01670 545 111, option 2  
Email: [jburt@bedeacademy.org.uk](mailto:jburt@bedeacademy.org.uk)

You should contact: Mrs R Soulsby (Attendance Officer - Primary)  
Telephone: 01670 545 111, option 1  
Email: [rsoulsby@bedeacademy.org.uk](mailto:rsoulsby@bedeacademy.org.uk)

The authorisation will be confirmed on your child's return when they bring a note confirming the reason for absence.

If the academy does not hear from you, you will be contacted the same day.

#### **What is meant by unauthorised absence?**

Unauthorised absence is when a child is taken out of the academy without the prior permission of the Principal.

Please note the following:

- Bede Academy does not authorise holidays in term time, in line with government guidelines, except for exceptional circumstances. If a parent wishes to remove a child for a holiday during term time then this will be treated by the academy as an unauthorised absence. This could lead to prosecution in line with government legislation. In any such cases the student will be expected to catch up with any missed work. However, the academy would urge parents not to book any holidays during term time due to the adverse effect that this will have on your child's education and the additional pressure your child will be under to catch up. Any such absence request will be followed up by the Vice Principal (Pastoral) or by a member of Senior Leadership Team (Bede South) who may invite parents into the academy to discuss the situation and offer support as required. All requests for leave during term time will be followed up in writing.

- Any requests for absence during term time must be made a minimum of two weeks in advance. The form which must be completed and returned to the academy is attached as an appendices.
- An occasional absence maybe authorised if there is a family crisis or if your child is unwell.

### **Why does my child need to be punctual?**

If your child arrives late:

- The rest of the class are settled and ready for learning but your child is not.
- Your child may have missed a key learning point.
- Your child interrupts the learning of other students whilst the teacher has to settle your child into the classroom and the lesson.

### **What if my child arrives late?**

He/she will need to sign in at the Main Reception in order to explain the reason for his/her lateness. The Attendance Officer will be informed and sanctions will be put in place if needed.

If parents are aware of the lateness a letter explaining the reason for it is required when the student arrives at the Academy.

If no letter is provided, then a letter is sent home to parents to explain the reason given by the student for his/her lateness.

Please note that frequent lateness will be investigated by the Attendance Officer and may involve students spending time at the academy during holidays. (Bede North only)

If students are late to the academy, without good reason, the following staged sanctions will apply (Bede North only):

1<sup>st</sup> late – break time detention

2<sup>nd</sup> late – 45 minutes detention

3<sup>rd</sup> late – 60 minutes detention

4<sup>th</sup> late – 2 hour Friday detention

5<sup>th</sup> late – parental meeting with the Attendance Officer

6<sup>th</sup> late – parental meeting with Assistant Vice Principal / Vice Principal Pastoral

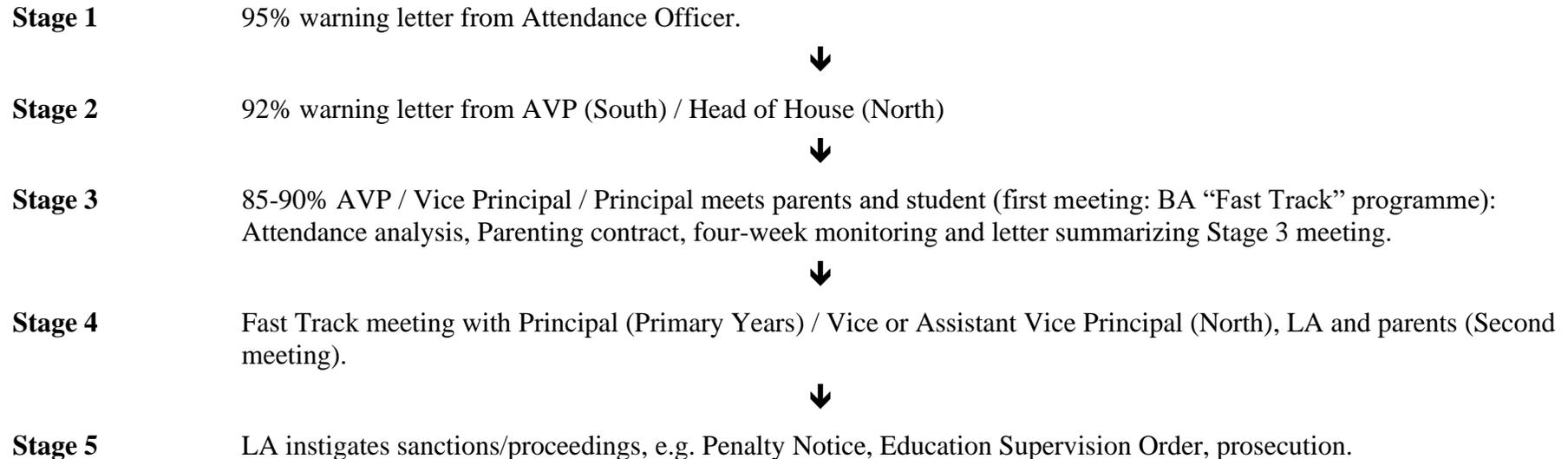
At each stage, parents will be informed.



## Bede Academy Attendance Procedure

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After the first 6 weeks of the Academy year the following actions will be enacted. Data is reviewed every half term.



\*Percentage figures represent data at the time of publication



## Students with attendance below 85%

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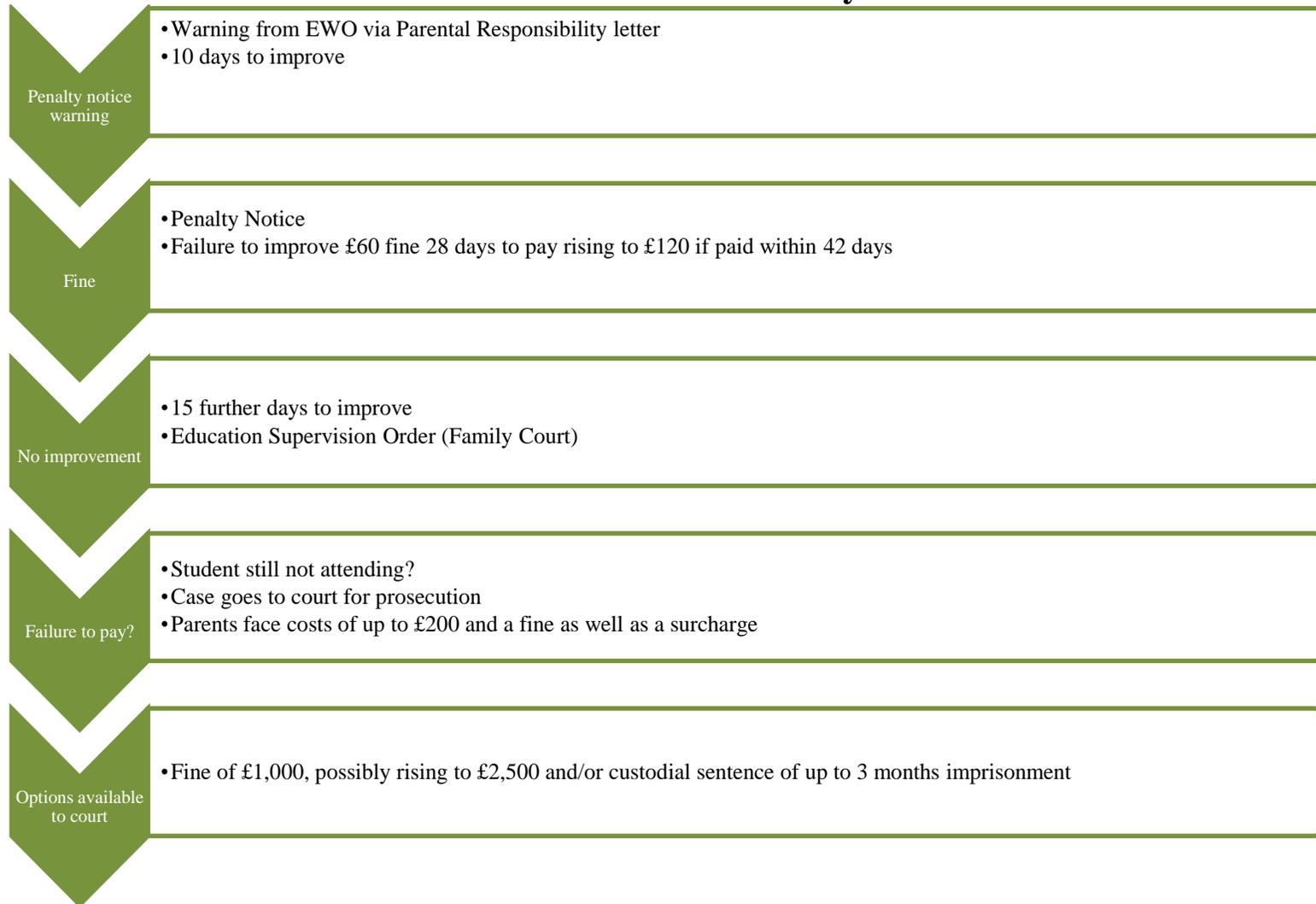
### First meeting: BA fast track meeting

- Meeting with parents
- % attendance unsatisfactory
- Invite parents to sign Academy Attendance Parenting Contract
- Four weeks of monitoring
- If no improvement, case referred to LA
- If improvement made, no further action other than continuous monitoring

### Second meeting: BA and LA

- Meeting with parents
- Further monitoring for four weeks.
- If further unauthorised absences, actions by LA could include:
  - Penalty notice (LA)
  - Refer to prosecution (LA)
  - Apply for Educational Supervision Order (LA)
  - Or further monitoring by LA (six weeks)

## Local Authority Actions





**Leave of Absence during Term Time**  
**Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and**  
**Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**

The 2013 amendments to the 2006 Regulations explain clearly that schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

If you consider you require leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances**, you should request permission from the Principal in advance of any absence by completing the form below:

<b>Name of student</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Tutor group</b>	
<b>Contact numbers</b>	

Details of request for absence for **exceptional circumstances**:

<b>First day of absence</b>	
<b>Date of return to Academy</b>	
<b>Total number of school days</b>	

Please fully explain below the **exceptional circumstances** relating to your request for leave of absence:

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**Declaration**

I have read and understood the information regarding leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, Penalty Notices and prosecution detailed overleaf. I am aware of the possible consequences should I take my child on leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Principal.

Parent's signature ..... Date .....

## **Important information for parents regarding leave of absence during term time**

The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time. The Law allows the Principal to consider individual requests to authorise a leave of absence **only in exceptional circumstances**.

In considering any request to authorise a leave of absence during term time, the Principal must be satisfied that there are **exceptional circumstances** to justify an authorised absence. It is the parent's responsibility when submitting a request to provide all information and evidence to prove **exceptional circumstances**.

A request for authorised leave of absence must be made well in advance and at least two weeks prior to the first day of absence. The Principal may invite the parent into the Academy to discuss the request before a decision is made, and any decision will take into account the child's attendance at the Academy.

If, having refused a request for leave of absence and the child is absent and recorded as unauthorised, the Principal may have to refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the Notice applies.

Each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child:

- Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before the Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act (1996) where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or three months' imprisonment.

It is important to note that children who are absent from the Academy may never catch up on the learning they miss, which may ultimately affect their academic progress. Bede Academy is very committed to your child's education and will support in every way possible. It is vital that you do not allow your child to be absent from the Academy for anything other than a very exceptional and unavoidable reason.

## **4. COVID-19 Addendum**

### **4.1 Attendance expectations**

From the start of the autumn term 2020 student attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the academy
- the academy's responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

### **4.2 New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Although attendance at the academy is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where students cannot attend the academy due to coronavirus (COVID-19). To make sure attendance is recorded accurately and consistently, a new category of non-attendance has been added – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. This category is only to be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a student does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, the academy would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

### **4.3 Attendance codes**

From the beginning of the new academic year, the academy will return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- students not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X
- the academy will continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged students who are not expected to attend a session, as it did before the outbreak.

### **4.4 Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply:**

- Students who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Students who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Students who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
- Students who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only
- Local lockdown

### **4.5 Remote education**

If a student is not attending the academy due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the academy will provide access to remote education; this will be done through the use of Google Classroom Any parents with any access issues should contact [academicteam@bedeacademy.org.uk](mailto:academicteam@bedeacademy.org.uk) who will try to resolve any issues.