Bury Belongs in School

Promoting Strong Inclusion Across Bury's Educational Landscape

Bury's **Education and Inclusion Strategy** is committed to ensuring that every child and young person attends, participates, belongs, and achieves within their local educational setting. This represents an urgent educational priority. Educational inclusion can no longer be treated as an isolated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) initiative or a reactive attendance enforcement process.



In November, Bury Council, alongside its strategic partners across health, social care, and the voluntary sector, will formally launch **Bury Belongs in School** at the **Bury Leadership Conference.**

This initiative represents a borough-wide pledge uniting education providers, healthcare professionals, children's social care teams, families, and community organizations around a shared commitment to remove systemic barriers to school participation. Grounded in the core principle that belonging cannot be mandated or imposed through punitive measures, the strategy recognizes that relational trust, psychological safety, adaptive teaching, and targeted early help create the essential conditions under which regular attendance and high academic attainment naturally occur.

A high attendance culture is not solely the responsibility of schools. It requires a coordinated approach involving education services, children's social care, health partners, families, early years settings, colleges and wider community organisations working together around a shared set of outcomes and beliefs. **"Unlocking Every Child's Potential"** reflects a commitment to removing barriers to participation so that all learners can flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

A Whole-System Commitment

The removal of barriers demands a coordinated whole-system approach that addresses the root causes of disengagement long before difficulties escalate into chronic absenteeism or exclusion.

Bury Belongs in School is anchored by the following operating principles:

- **Universal Responsibility** Inclusion and attendance are the collective responsibility of all education, health, social care, and community partners across the borough.
- **Proactive Early Help** High-quality, multi-agency early intervention must be deployed when disengagement risks emerge, preventing problems from escalating into more problematic crises.
- **Needs-Led Support** Provision and support must be tailored directly to a child's observed strengths and barriers, rather than relying on formal medical diagnoses or statutory Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- **Mainstream Success by Design** Mainstream schools must be structurally and

relationally equipped to support the vast majority of learners safely and successfully within their local neighbourhoods.
- **Coordinated Family Experience** Children and families must experience one seamless, integrated multi-agency response, eliminating disjointed referrals and fragmented service delivery.

Bury Belongs in School's institutional pledge acknowledges that attendance difficulties are often symptoms of wider barriers. For some children these barriers may relate to anxiety, mental health needs or neurodiversity. For others they may stem from family circumstances, poverty, safeguarding concerns, health conditions, unmet SEND needs or challenges during transition.

There are also significant differences between inclusion indicators when comparing Bury's primary and secondary settings (see LA Ranking Report)

Bury's Inclusion Deficit: Secondary Sector Underperformance

An analysis of local performance metrics highlights challenges across Bury's educational landscape. Comparative data drawn from local authority performance rankings reveal severe disengagement, high suspension rates, persistent absence, and depressed academic progress from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4.

The quantitative data underscores a stark divergence between primary and secondary phases across the following key inclusion indicators:

- **Secondary Suspension Rates** Bury ranks 83rd out of 153 local authorities nationally for secondary suspensions, placing the borough in the 46th percentile. Within the Greater Manchester GM10 peer group, Bury ranks 6th out of 11, and 7th among its 11 Statistical Neighbours. For secondary pupils with identified SEND, the suspension rate reaches an alarming baseline of 226 suspensions per 1,000 pupils, compared to a primary SEND suspension rate of just 14 per 1,000.

- **Secondary Permanent Exclusions** The permanent exclusion rate for secondary pupils with identified SEND stands at 2.71 per 1,000 pupils, over six times higher than the primary SEND rate of 0.42 per 1,000.

- **Persistent Absence Dynamics** Persistent absence among secondary pupils with identified SEND stands at 39.4%, compared to 21.3% in the primary phase. Overall attendance for secondary SEND pupils drops to 85.3%, whereas primary SEND attendance remains at 92.4%.

- **Key Stage 4 Academic Progress**: Academic outcomes at GCSE directly reflect these disengagement patterns. Secondary pupils on SEN Support achieve a mean Attainment 8 score of 33.9. For pupils holding an EHCP, the mean Attainment 8 score drops to 14.6 indicating that vulnerable learners in Bury fall nearly a full grade per subject behind national expectations.

To help tackle these challenges and promote accountability across the borough, an **Inclusion Dashboard** will track qualitative and quantitative indicators across six core strands:

- **Participation & Attendance** Will track overall attendance, persistent absence and

severe absence broken down by phase, SEN status, FSM eligibility, and ethnicity.
- **Behavioural Dynamics** Will monitors fixed-term suspensions, permanent exclusions, internal disciplinary isolations, and alternative provision usage.
- **SEND System Flow** Will track SEN Support cohorts, rolling 12-month EHCNA requests, EHCP issuance rates, and 20-week statutory compliance performance.
- **Academic Outcomes** Will track Key Stage 2 reading, writing, and mathematics attainment, GCSE Attainment 8 and Progress 8 gaps, Level 2/3 qualifications at age 19, and 16–17 NEET rates.
- **Placement Sufficiency** Will track occupancy in mainstream resourced inclusion bases, independent non-maintained special school (INMSS) reliance, and out-of-borough placement trends.
- **Family & Pupil Voice** Will captures parent-carer satisfaction metrics, SENDIASS feedback, mediation-to-tribunal conversion rates, and pupil belonging survey indices.

A Team Around the School and Family

The **Bury Belongs in School** vision is founded on bringing together an extensive network of expertise across the whole system. This will be realised through the SEND Reform **Experts at Hand model** and closley aligned to the **Inclusion Strategy** of each school looking to create 'inclusion by design' in our mainstream settings. It is in short creating a visible "team around the school and family" approach.

Aligning Support Across Stakeholders

Bury's **Local SEND Reform Plan**, which has now been approved by the Department for Education (see attached **Outcomes Letter**) sets out a Year 1 plan that is focused on aligning the support across a wide range of services and professionals. The following list across several agencies is not exhaustive but highlights the depth and range of support available:

Education Services

- Educational Psychologists
- School Improvement Advisers
- SEND Team
- Outreach Services
- Family Hubs
- Early Years team
- Portage
- Deaf and Hearing Impairment Service
- Vision Impairment Service
- Multi-Sensory Impairment Services
- SENDCO Networks
- Communities of Practice
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Programme
- Multi-Agency Inclusion Panels
- Virtual School
- Attendance Networks
- Designated Safeguarding Lead Networks
- Designated Teacher Networks
- Inclusion and Alternative Provision Services

Health Services

- Health Visiting Teams
- SEND Health Visitors
- School Nursing Teams
- Specialist School Nursing
- Community Paediatricians
- Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Physiotherapy
- Continence Service
- Community Eye Service
- Sensory Assessment Teams
- Children's Learning Disability Team
- Epilepsy Services
- Community Dietetics
- Mental Health Support Teams
- CAMHS
- CAMHS Rapid Response Team
- Neurodevelopmental Pathways
- Neurodiversity Hub
- Designated Clinical Officer for SEND
- Intensive Support Service
- GM Keyworker Service (Barnardo's)

Children's Social Care and Family Support

- Early Help Services
- MASSH
- Duty and Assessment Teams
- Family Safeguarding Service
- Care and Support Service Teams
- Complex Safeguarding Team
- Youth Justice Service
- Children with Disabilities Team
- Short Break Services
- Family Hubs
- Best Start Services
- Next Chapter Teams (Care Experienced Young People)
- Transition to Adult Social Care Teams (Preparing for Adulthood)
- Advocacy Services

Voluntary, Community and Sector Partners

- BIG
- Creative Living Centre
- Calico
- Healthy Minds
- Kooth
- Early Break (RISE)
- Parenting Support Programmes including Riding the Rapids
- Local community organisations and commissioned services supporting children, young people and families.

These networks working collaboratively to support eduaction settings demonstrates that **Bury Belongs in School** is far more than a school attendance initiative. It is an integrated approach to supporting children and families before difficulties escalate and ensuring help is available at the earliest opportunity

Bury Belongs in School in School will develop over time through strong partnership working and will be built on the positive relationships we continue to forge across partnerships that include school leaders, special schools, colleges, early years providers, NHS leaders, social care leaders, educational psychologists, SEND leaders and parent carers working together to remove barriers and improve outcomes for children and young people.

By bringing together the strengths of schools, families and services under a shared banner, **Bury Belongs in School** aims to create the conditions in which every child can participate, belong and succeed.