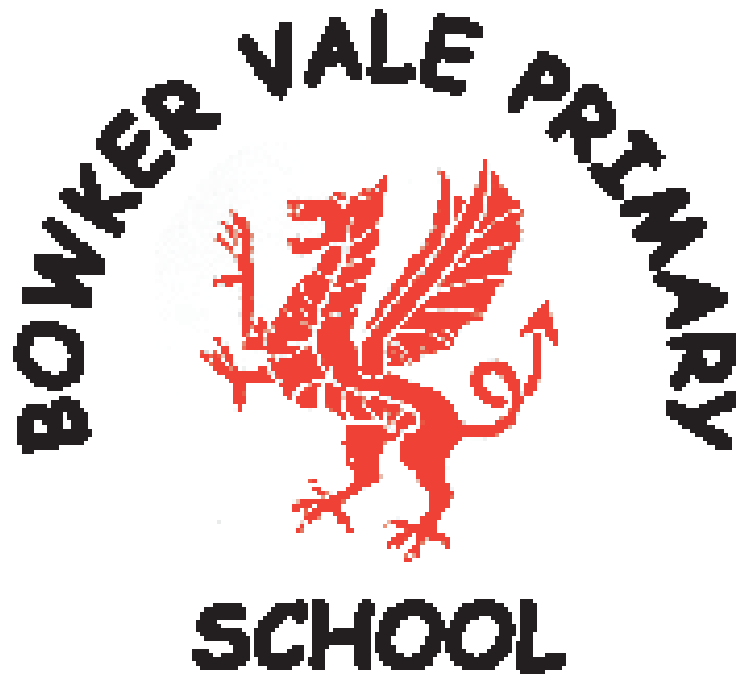


Bowker Vale Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Owner	Jen Griffin
Signed	<i>S Dobson</i>
Designation	Monitoring and Standards committee Chair

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 Bowker Vale Primary school believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- 1.3 Bowker Vale Primary School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- 1.4 Bowker Vale Primary School recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2. Legal Framework

- 2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parent/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- 2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parent/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary use legal enforcement.
- 2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:
 - present;
 - absent;
 - present at approved educational activity; or
 - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Categorising absence

- 3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- 3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parent/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- 3.3 Parent/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carers, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parent/carers.
- 3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:
- 3.5 **Illness:** In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carers informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parent/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- 3.6 **Medical/Dental Appointments:** Parent/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parent/carers should show the appointment card to school.
- 3.7 **Other Authorised Circumstances:** This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent/carers in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.
- 3.8 **Excluded (No alternative provision made):** Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- 3.9 **Leave of Absence:** Amendments to the 2006 regulations make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.
- 3.9.1 In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.
- 3.9.2 Applications to request Leave of Absence in **exceptional circumstances** must be made in writing to the Headteacher.
- 3.9.3 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing by the Headteacher. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:
- The expected date of return
 - That parent/carers must contact school should any delays occur
 - That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

Please note;

- Absence will not normally be authorised if it takes a pupils attendance below 92%.
- Absence will not normally be authorised at the beginning of school terms or during assessment periods.
- Evidence may be required in each case; this includes, but is not limited to, wedding invitations, medical evidence or travel documents.
- The Headteacher will not authorise any absence if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education.

- 3.9.4 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parent/carer has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that your child will lose their school place.
- 3.9.5 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice fine.
- 3.9.6 Only in **exceptional circumstances** will extended leave of absence of more than 10 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parent/carers will be required to justify why the holiday needs to be taken during term time. Consideration of extended leave of absence should only be considered once in a child's Primary phase as directed by the Manchester Strategy Guidance (April 2009) (Pg4, Section 5:11).
- 3.9.7 **Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & modelling.**
Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher, in writing to explain the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence.
- 3.9.8 **Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport.**
Parents of able children can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national or international event or competition. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.
- 3.10 **Religious Observance:** Bowker Vale Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.
- 3.10.1 It is reasonable for a parent/carer to allow their child/ren not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent/carers religious body.
- 3.10.2 Parent/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.
- 3.10.3 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, no more than three days in total in any academic year will be authorised. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.
- 3.11 **Traveller Absence:** The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.
- 3.11.1 To protect Traveller parent/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 100 school days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or

business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

- 3.11.2 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parent/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.
- 3.11.3 When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see 3.11.7, below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
- 3.11.4 Bowker Vale Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at Bowker Vale Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.
- 3.11.5 Bowker Vale Primary School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parent/carers must:
- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
 - inform the school regarding proposed return dates
- 3.11.6 Bowker Vale Primary School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.
- 3.11.7 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:
- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
 - Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
 - The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced
- 3.11.8 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.
- 3.12 **Late Arrival:** Registration begins at 8.45am and registers are completed by 8.50am. Pupils arriving **after** this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after the **close** of registration will be marked in the register but the lateness will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.
- 3.12.1 All pupils arriving after **8.50am** must immediately report to the school office where they will be issued with a late slip. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be given an unauthorised mark to ensure school can be responsible for their health and safety whilst on the school premises.
- 3.12.2 The Headteacher may decide not to authorise lateness for pupils who are persistently late to school, this means pupils who regularly arrive after 8.50am will be marked using the U code. In such cases the Headteacher will notify parent/carers of her decision and explain the possible consequences of continued unauthorised absence due to persistent lateness.
- 3.12.3 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

3.12.4 The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

3.13 Unauthorised absence:

3.13.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

4. Deletions from the Register

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

4.2 Bowker Vale Primary School will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Bowker Vale Primary School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parent/carers, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parent/carers
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters –link Governor is Keri Vogan
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with

- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at the Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Return school attendance data as required and on time to Children's Services

5.2 The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data as required and on time to Children's Services
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through the Governing Body
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.3 All Staff members will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.4 Request that Parent/carers will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking Leave of Absence during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written request to the Head Teacher. In advance of the Leave of Absence.

6. Using Attendance Data

- 6.1 Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.
- 6.2 Every half term all class teachers will be provided with attendance data for each pupil within their class. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attendees at the top.
- 6.3 This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).
- 6.4 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- 6.5 Bowker Vale Primary may share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority if required.
- 6.6 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

7. Support Systems

- 7.1 School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parent/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child/ren's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.
- 7.2 Bowker Vale Primary School also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

7.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parent/carers and pupils
- Home visits
- Attendance panels
- Parent/carer Agreement
- Referrals to support agencies
- PSHE
- Family learning
- Parent/carer contracts
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

7.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parent/carer and pupils.

7.5 Where parent/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Bowker Vale Primary School will consider the use of legal Sanctions.

8. Legal Sanctions

8.1 Prosecution: Where school have exhausted all avenues of intervention and parent/carers fail to bring about an improvement in attendance then school may consider the use of legal intervention through the local authority.

The school will provide the local authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parent/carers realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

8.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

8.1.2 A parent/carer found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months and may receive a criminal record.

8.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parent/carer Contracts, Penalty Notice Fines or an Education Supervision Order.

8.2 Parent/carer Contracts (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parent/carer contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent/carers, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

8.2.1 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

8.2.2 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parent/carers fail to carry out agreed actions.

8.2.3 Parent/carer Contracts will be used in accordance with Bowker Vale Parent/carers Contract Protocol.

8.3 Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003).

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accumulated at least five sessions (2.5 Days) of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following a written warning to improve.

8.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent/carers the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

8.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

8.3.3 Parent/carers that are prosecuted for the non payment of a Penalty Notice may receive a criminal record.

Appendix 1

Escalation of Attendance Interventions

GREEN pupils with attendance between 100% to 95%

Parent/carers will receive a letter home congratulating them on their child's good/excellent attendance.

Pupils will be rewarded within the school's reward system.

Pupils with this level of termly and annual attendance will receive a certificate of achievement and throughout the year an attendance celebration will be displayed.

The Senior leadership team will analysis data to show use of intervention and outcomes this information will be shared with staff.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and will also have links to performance management.

AMBER pupils with attendance between 94.9% and 90%

The Class teacher/Attendance team will speak to the parent/carer to:

- Inform them that their child/ren have fallen into the amber group
- Offer support to parent/carer to improve attendance
- Discuss with the parent/carer the consequences of being on track of becoming a persistently absent pupil
- In cases of persistent lateness advise parent/carers of possible consequences if there is no improvement
- Agree a review date

In addition, where further unauthorised absence has occurred or attendance has not improved following the review with parent/carer, a letter will be sent to parent/carer reminding them of their responsibility to ensure their child's receives an appropriate education.

Where improvement has not occurred following this intervention, the following interventions will be used:

- Identify underlying home/school issues that may be causing the pupil's absence
- Review the pupil's academic progress and make links to the pupil's attendance eg. If you attended all your classes you could achieve...
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil using sessions rather than percentages that will see the pupil move to the band above
- Agree a review date

If improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parent/carers will be invited to a meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- A panel meeting with the Attendance team
- Agree a review date

Where this intervention has been implemented with no satisfactory impact, the parent/carer will be invited into school where the possible outcomes will be:

- To agree a parent/carer contract
- To discuss the consequences of being on track to becoming a persistently absent pupil
- Agree a review date

The Attendance team will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be kept on the pupils file by the Attendance team.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership team will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

RED pupils with attendance below 90%

Pupils who have attendance below 90% are considered to be persistently absent from school. To ensure that intervention is focused and meets the needs of individuals, pupils will be grouped in to one of the following categories:

- Looked After Children and Children on the Child Protection Register
- Special Educational Needs
- Parental support/needs eg parental drug use, young carers, domestic violence
- School issues eg bullying, poor teacher/pupil relationship, curriculum issues
- Offended or have an Anti Social Behaviour Order
- English as an Additional Language
- Ethnic minority
- Mid Year Admissions
- Gifted and Talented

Each grouping will have an identified member of staff who will:

- Ensure that the parent/carers have already spoken to a member of staff at the stages proceeding RED intervention.
- Obtain records of previous contact and interventions.
- Ensure weekly contact with the parent/carer to discuss any arising issues and to provide feedback on their child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil that will see the pupil move to the band above.
- Review existing plans and co-ordinate school resources to support the pupil's attendance and any additional needs
- Be the key contact person for any external agency working with the pupil
- Input into whole school strategies to address the needs of pupils within their group

Each identified member of staff will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be kept by the Senior Leadership team.

Attendance will be a standing item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership team meetings where the progress of these groups will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and will also have links to performance management.

The Headteacher will report to the Chair of Governors at Governing Body meetings

Points of reference:

Manchester City Council Attendance Policy Guide

Manchester City Council Children's Services Attendance Strategy (2009)

Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol

Education Act 1944, section 86

Education Act 1996

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Human Rights Act 1998

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Race Relations Act 2000

Children Act 1989

Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003