



Bishop Fox's

A Business and Enterprise Academy School
High Standards & High Expectations

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

1. Rationale

- 1.1 This policy and related procedures are designed to ensure regular full-time attendance by students in this school. The commitment to regular attendance is based on the firm belief that good attendance underpins sound educational progress for individuals and the teaching groups they are members of, enabling students to achieve their full potential. Good attendance is essential for stability, continuity and achievement.
- 1.2 At Bishop Fox's School, we strive to ensure that we provide a caring, welcoming and inclusive environment in which we safeguard students and support academic and pastoral needs at all times.
- 1.3 In promoting good attendance and punctuality, school staff will work with students, families and external agencies to ensure that students access full-time education at Bishop Fox's School.

2. Aims

- 2.1 To ensure that attendance and punctuality is a priority for all students, parents/guardians, teachers, support staff and governors, aiming to achieve an annual attendance level in excess of national averages or annual targets.
- 2.2 To encourage students to attend school on a regular basis and aim for attendance of 100%, whilst being punctual to school and lessons.
- 2.3 To support parents with their duty to ensure that children attend school punctually on a regular basis, through support and guidance (including the use of external agencies wherever necessary).
- 2.4 To ensure that positive and consistent communication between Bishop Fox's School and home is promoted at all times.
- 2.5 To reward excellence and improve attendance.
- 2.6 To monitor closely all student attendance and proactively take appropriate action where there are concerns.
- 2.7 To promote effective partnerships with the Education Attendance Service and other external services and agencies that can support students, families and schools.

- 2.8 To recognise the needs of individual students when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- 2.9 To make parents aware of their legal obligations regarding attendance and of the potential actions and graduated response for failure to do so.
- 2.10 We aim to promote good attendance and punctuality, tackling poor attendance and truancy using the statutory powers of the Local Authority, including the use of Penalty Notices and Prosecutions.

3. **LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/guardians have an obligation to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs that he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, while the child is of compulsory school age. Parents/guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education – Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- 3.2 Students are required to attend school on time, to arrive at registration (*morning and afternoon sessions*), punctually and to sign in with the Deputy Headteacher if they arrive between 8.45am – 9.00am. In the event of the student arriving later than 9.00am, students should sign in at Student Services (*before the register has closed*). The register is closed at 9.30am. Thereafter, lateness counts as a **'U' code which is an unauthorised absence**. The register is taken in all lessons in addition to the AM and PM registers, using Lesson Monitor. The register is also taken at the start of the afternoon session.
- 3.3 Bishop Fox's School must have two registers:

Admission Register – which is the school roll, and
Attendance Register – which is called twice a day
- 3.4 In order to identify problems relating to school attendance, the Governing Body of the school, and through the Governing Body, the Headteacher is obliged under **Section 434 of the Education Act 1996 and the Supporting Regulations, Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 1995** to maintain an admissions register for all students at the school and an attendance register of such students, indicating at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session whether the relevant student is present in school, absent of attending an "approved educational activity".
- 3.5 The attendance register must also indicate whether a student's absence is authorised by the school, or is unauthorised. It must also record the nature of any "approved educational activity". This information is recorded so as to clearly differentiate between an authorised absence, an unauthorised absence and an approved educational activity.
- 3.6 In accordance with **Section 42 Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998**, the Governing Body is required to publish figures relating to school attendance as part of their annual report. *These are also submitted to the Local Authority.*

4. **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

4.1 There are two sessions per day – morning and afternoon. The register shows whether the student is present, engaged in an educational activity off-site or absent. The register is taken online. A register is then taken at the start of each lesson for all students. Absences during school lessons will be marked as unauthorised absences.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

4.2 Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for absence. Bishop Fox's School may request proof of medical absence if a student has more than three days of illness, or with attendance below 92% with prior warning.

4.3 Medical/dental appointments – appointment card required

4.4 All other absences must be treated as unauthorised.

PARENTAL CONDONED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

4.5 Only the school can approve absence, not parents/guardians. School staff need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence, whether written, telephoned or given in person. If they doubt the explanation, it is for the school to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence. 'Illness' or 'unwell' will not be a satisfactory explanation.

4.6 The school will involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if unauthorised absence appears to be a problem with a particular student; this is normally after ten unauthorised sessions.

4.7 The school explains to parents/guardians, through the Headteacher's annual letter in July to all parents, how they must notify the school of their child's absence. Parents are required to do this on the **first day of absence** and every day of absence unless otherwise agreed (01823 255019). The School Attendance Officer has dedicated time to monitor absence, with first day texting for any unexplained absences.

4.8 Students must attend unless:

- They are too ill to do so
- Their absence lists any other of the school's discretionary reasons, such as compassionate leave of absence, religious observance or where special educational requirements have been made

5. **CATEGORIES OF AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

5.1 A leave of absence during term time is only able to be granted by the Headteacher or an authorised deputy (Senior Leadership Team on behalf of the school's Governing Body) under **exceptional circumstances**. All reference to a holiday and/or extended leave, including the threshold of ten school days is removed. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Headteacher in advance of the absence.

5.2 There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However, from discussion with the DfE and concerned professional associations, it is suggested that exceptional leave may include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- Police, Fire and Ambulance Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave
- If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to together, especially if the family member lives overseas
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period

Exceptional circumstances are not:

- Availability of cheap flights/holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Festivals or other one-off events
- Visiting family or friends who have different school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of a school holiday break
- Moving house

Family holidays during term-time

- Parents should not normally take students on holiday in term-time except in exceptional circumstances. Please see specific Holiday Request Form for further details.

5.3 If a request for term-time absence is refused and your child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and noted on your child's school record.

6. APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OFF-SITE

6.1 The absence of students to take part in educational activities outside the school, but authorised by the school, is recorded as 'approved educational activity'. Approved Educational Activities off-site include:

6.2 Approved educational activities off-site include:

- Dual registration arrangements with a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)/Alternative Educational Provision/medical tuition
- Virtual Learning Classroom (Taunton Deane Partnership College)
- Fields trips and educational visits
- Participation in, or attendance at sporting events/activities
- Work Experience
- Extended Work Experience
- Interviews with prospective employers or for a place at a further education establishment (Year 11 only)
- Link courses whereby students attend a further education college for part of the week
- Franchised students receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location whilst remaining under the overall supervision of Bishop Fox's School (eg home tuition)

7. **TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE**

7.1 For school days where the whole school has to close due to severe weather conditions (eg floods/snow), heating failure, fire or structural damage, no attendance registers are needed. The school website, local television and radio will confirm if emergency enforced school closure takes place.

8. **DELETING STUDENTS FROM THE SCHOOL ROLL**

A student can be removed from the school roll:

8.1 If moving to another area or school. The current school should find out the name and address of the new school and when the student will start. This information should be confirmed with the receiving school. When a school transfer form has been completed and Somerset LA informed, the student's name can be removed.

8.2 When a parent informs the school **IN WRITING** that they are removing their child, it is incumbent on the school to inform the LA. This includes Elective Home Education.

8.3 Permanent exclusion.

8.4 The death of the child.

If a student does not return to school after a holiday or period of extended absence but none of the above apply, the school must take all reasonable steps to ascertain the whereabouts of the child. When the EWO and school are satisfied that a significant period of time has elapsed, register CME after 20 school days.

8.5 **All schools** (including academies and independent schools) must notify their LA when they are about to remove a student's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations 'Children Missing from Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016 (Appendix A)'. This duty does not apply when a student's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points – when the student has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

8.6 When removing a student's name, the notification to the local authority must include:

1. The student's full name
2. The full name and address of any parent with whom the student normally resides
3. At least one telephone number of the parent
4. The student's future address and destination school, if applicable
5. The grounds in Regulation 8 under which the student's name is to be removed from the admission register (see Appendix A)

8.7 Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the student's name from the register if the deletion is under Regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii) (see Appendix A).

- 8.8 All schools must notify the local authority within 5 days of adding a student's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new student. This duty does not apply when a student's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority request that such returns are to be made.
- 8.9 When adding a student's name, the notification to the local authority must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new student.
- 8.10 Where a student has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the student can be removed from the admission register after the school has made reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.
- 8.11 If a student goes missing from education, this is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. School and college staff should follow their procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.
- 8.12 It is essential that all staff are alert to the signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Further information about children at risk of missing education can be found in the Children Missing Education guidance.
- 8.13 Schools and local authorities should work together to agree on methods of making returns. When making returns, the school should highlight to the local authority where they have been unable to obtain the necessary information from the parent, for example in cases where the child's destination school or address is unknown. Schools should also consider whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as any safeguarding concerns.

It is essential that schools comply with these duties, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be at risk of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of being harmed, exploited or radicalised.

- 8.14 The DfE provides a secure internet system – school2school – to allow schools to transfer student information to another school when the child moves. All local authority maintained schools are required, when a student ceases to be registered at their school and becomes a registered student at another school

in England or Wales, to send a Common Transfer File (CTF) to the new school. Academies (including free schools) are also strongly encouraged to send CTFs when a student leaves to attend another school. Independent schools can be given access to school2school by the DfE.

- 8.15 The school2school website also contains a searchable area commonly referred to as the 'Lost Student Database', where schools can upload CTFs of students who have left but their destination or next school is unknown, or the child has moved abroad or transferred to a non-maintained school. If a student arrives in a school and the previous school is unknown, schools should contact their local authority who will be able to search the database.

9. **ILLNESS, MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

- 9.1 Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence. Students should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. The school will request sight of an appointment card. Students must 'sign out' at Student Services. This absence only covers a reasonable amount of time to travel to and from the appointment.

- 9.2 If a student is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or goes home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session.

- 9.3 A record of students leaving or returning to site is kept in Student Services (in case of emergency). Students must report to Student Services on arriving late or leaving early. Lateness must be recorded (both before and after registration has closed).

- 9.4 If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and EWOs will consult the school health service or the student's own GP. Proof of medical advice will be sought from the family.

- 9.5 The Special Educational Needs Policy sets out guidelines for students who are absent due to CFS/ME or other long-term viral illnesses.

10. **DAYS OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

- 10.1 This is absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, or students observing religious festivals (eg Ramadan).

- 10.2 The school will be sensitive to these requests and parents are asked to give advance notice.

11. **EXCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 A student excluded for a fixed period of time remains on-roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded student is treated as authorised whilst any review or appeal is in progress.

- 11.2 In the case of a permanent exclusion the student's name should be removed from the school roll on the first school day after the day on which:

- i) the independent appeal panel upholds the permanent exclusion
- ii) the independent appeal panel does not uphold the permanent exclusion, but does not direct the student's reinstatement
- iii) the prescribed period of logging an appeal has expired and the parent has not lodged an appeal
- iv) the parent has before the expiry of the prescribed period, advised the LA in writing that he/she does not intend to appeal

In the meantime the absence is to be recorded as authorised.

The school is responsible for setting work for an excluded student who remains on the school roll.

12. **TRAVELLER CHILD WHEN THE FAMILY IS TRAVELLING**

12.1 To help ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller Children, dual registration means that the school will not remove a Traveller Child from the school roll whilst they are travelling.

12.2 While the Traveller Child is away, the school holds the place open for the duration agreed by the parent/guardian and the school will record the absence as authorised.

13. **FAMILY BEREAVEMENT**

13.1 The school will respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events, and has the discretion to authorise such absences.

14. **CHILD CARING FOR A SICK OR DISABLED FAMILY MEMBER (Young carers)**

14.1 In a genuine crisis the school can approve absence for a child to care for a relative until other arrangements can be made. A time limit will be set for the absence and some school work so the student does not fall behind whilst at home. Referral to outside agencies will be done sensitively – recognising that a child may fear being 'put into care' if the parent/guardian is seen as unable to cope. In the final analysis it is important to remember that in accordance with the Children's Act 1989, the interests of the child are paramount.

15. **FAMILY PRISON VISITS**

15.1 The school should authorise requests for absence which will enable a child to visit his or her parent in prison, although it should not be authorised for the same day every week.

16. **PREGNANT STUDENT**

16.1 Support will be directed to keep the student in school where possible and to return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth.

16.2 A girl who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time any absence should be treated as unauthorised, unless part of a planned phased return, mutually agreed.

17. **SPECIAL OCCASIONS**

- 17.1 The school will consider each request individually. Only exceptional circumstances warrant leave of absence.

18. **PUBLIC PERFORMANCES INCLUDING FILM OR TV WORK**

- 18.1 The school may allow absence for a student to take part in a public performance. Agreed participation will be considered and authorised if appropriate. However, the potential impact on the student's own learning and the learning of others will be the priority when coming to a decision.

19. **ETHNIC MINORITIES**

- 19.1 The Equal Opportunities Policy provides separate data for monitoring the attendance of all students on roll who have an ethnic minority background.

20. **PROCEDURES**

- 20.1 The attached procedures seek to ensure that all those involved in pursuing the aims of the Attendance Policy play an active role in its effective implementation.

The role of the form tutor

1. To take a 'formal' register at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions
2. To insist on written explanation on return from absence. (Phone call from home required on first day of absence. Attendance Officer to make early first day call/send a text home where absence is unexplained)
3. To monitor patterns of lateness and instigate appropriate action after 3 lates
4. To notify the Head of Year if the problem persists or patterns emerge
5. To countersign note in planner re request from parent for child to leave the school for an 'authorised' reason

The role of the Head of Year

1. To support and advise tutors
2. To ensure appropriate recording of attendance/absences with Year Team
3. To attend Behaviour/Attendance and Welfare tracking meetings to monitor individual and group attendance trends
4. To meet with students falling below acceptable standard(s) and discuss actions that can be taken to improve and support attendance/punctuality (see Attendance Student Intervention Summary)
5. To agree and monitor appropriate support and consequences for repeat latecomers (3 lates = after school detention; each late after this = an additional after school detention)
6. To invite parents/guardians into school to discuss child's attendance/punctuality if school intervention is unsuccessful
7. To refer to the Deputy Headteacher – Student Welfare and Discipline, if 2, 3, 4 and 5 do not result in improvements
8. To meet with EWO to ensure appropriate follow-up for those students whose session absence is a concern or attendance falls below 90%
9. To liaise with the Attendance Officer on 'red alert list' of 'known' poor attenders who require immediate follow-up
10. To encourage 100% attendance by issuing a range of individual and class rewards to promote high attendance and improvements in attendance. This will include two-weekly and half-termly attendance rewards and certificates
11. To notify parents and take appropriate follow-up action if students in year group truant from school eg catch-up work set as home, internal exclusion

The role of the Deputy Headteacher – Student Welfare

1. To oversee the monitoring of attendance
2. To work with Heads of Year, EWO and other outside agencies to ensure appropriate action is taken for those students with poor attendance
3. To ensure data is available to monitor attendance on a regular basis (fortnightly)
4. To meet with students falling below acceptable standard if action put in place by Head of Year has shown no improvement in terms of attendance/punctuality
5. To meet with parents of students falling below acceptable standards of attendance
6. To agree annual attendance targets with the Headteacher
7. To ensure that good attendance is actively promoted with students and parents
8. To review attendance figures with EWO each half-term

The role of the Attendance Officer

1. To check attendance registers are marked appropriately and to inform Head of Year if a concern.
2. To receive phone calls from parents and authorise absence using accepted codes where appropriate
3. To send texts to parents/guardians regarding any unexplained absences
4. To communicate any concerns re authorisation to HOY or Deputy Headteacher and act on advice
5. To ensure students are signed-in, if late
6. To contact parents if a student is showing a pattern of lateness (lateness letter)
7. To provide lateness report to Deputy Headteacher, Student Welfare so that follow-up enquiries/detentions are able to run effectively
8. To update two-weekly attendance reports for individuals and groups of students for unauthorised absence, medical absence, attendance <94%, 90%, 93.9% and persistent absence <90% (for HOY/DHT/HT/EWO)
9. To update the two-weekly tracker for interventions and actions for key students with attendance concerns
10. To liaise with parents and communicate through meetings and attendance letters concerns and actions
11. To provide form attendance summaries to HOY, tutors and SLT
12. To circulate to staff, each half-term, names of students who are on 'red alert' list regarding attendance
13. To prepare statistics for the Headteacher, including the annual report to the DfE

The role of all staff

1. To take a register for each lesson and to record absences/lateness
2. To investigate and inform form tutor if there is any concern regarding a student's attendance/punctuality
3. To ensure appropriate follow-up if a student has missed lessons either through absenteeism, lateness or truancy
4. To inform Attendance Officer immediately to check register if 'known' truant(s) not in lesson
5. To stress to students the importance of regular attendance and punctuality
6. To ensure at the end of each lesson that students move 'briskly' to their next lesson

The role of parents

1. To notify the school of absence by phone on the first day of non-attendance
2. To send a note to child's form tutor to explain absence on return of child to school
3. To notify school, in advance, of any known absence eg doctor's appointment (note in planner)
4. To try and arrange appointments out of school time
5. To arrange holidays during school holiday dates. If, in exceptional circumstances this is not possible, to apply in good time for permission from the Headteacher for a maximum of up to two school weeks' leave of absence for their child from school
6. To ensure their child arrives to school in time for registration
7. To support the school with its actions to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality
8. To support the school's actions and sanctions where students have unauthorised absence or have unsatisfactory reasons for repeated late arrival to school and/or lessons

The role of the student

1. To aim for 100% attendance and punctuality
2. To hand a note to their form tutor on return from an absence
3. To collect a holiday form, if necessary, from reception well in advance of date
4. To sign in at Student Services and provide explanation if arriving late to school
5. To sign out at Student Services when leaving school for authorised absence, eg doctor's appointment, and to sign in again upon return
6. To accept the consequences for lateness, truancy or low attendance

The role of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

1. To meet with the Deputy Headteacher, Student Welfare/Heads of Years/Attendance Officer/form tutors to monitor attendance/punctuality
2. To take immediate action where concerns are highlighted, eg surgeries, penalty notices and referral to further support agencies
3. To report back to the Deputy Headteacher, Student Welfare/Heads of Year and suggest ways forward re individuals causing concern.