

For this we stand:
to search for truth;
to live in love;
to grow together.



"Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is Jesus Christ"

Ephesians 4

BISHOP WORDSWORTH'S SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Definitions

1. 'Parent(s)' includes guardian(s) or any person who has parental responsibility for the student or who has care of him/her.
2. 'Is to', 'are to' and 'must' are obligatory. 'Should' is not obligatory but is good practice and is to be adhered to unless non-compliance can be justified.

PREAMBLE

1. Staff and governors strongly believe that for students to be successful, they need excellent attendance. Good attendance is inextricably linked to good student behaviour and effective teaching and learning. Moreover, regular attendance and punctuality at school is important for the future prospects and well-being of students. The School also recognises that poor attendance can be an indicator of a pastoral or safeguarding concern and to this end, all students' attendance is to be monitored carefully, and action taken should problems arise.
2. This policy meets the requirements of *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (DfE, 2024) and has regard to current legislation and statutory guidance, including *The Education Act (1996 and 2002)*, *The Education (Student Registration), (England) Regulations 2006*, *The Education (Penalty Notices), (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013*.
3. In developing this Policy, consideration has been given to our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Whilst this policy should be applied fairly and consistently, the School recognises that there may be individual needs of students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance, and these should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. **Objectives.** The objectives of this Policy are to:
 - a. Promote good attendance and punctuality.
 - b. Ensure all members of Bishop Wordsworth's School (the School) community understand their role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
5. **Roles.** The School seeks to work in cooperation with parents to encourage regular attendance within the School. There are clear roles for all involved in good attendance – students, parents, the Attendance Officer, tutors, subject teachers, Heads of School, Pastoral Support Officer, SENDCO, School Nurse, Education Welfare Officer (EWO), Leadership Team, Designated Safeguarding Lead and the link Governor. The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is Nikki Mesnard, Assistant

Head (Student Development) (nem@bishopwordsworths.org.uk). The governor with oversight of attendance is Julia Phippard.

6. Attendance & Punctuality. The School seeks to encourage good attendance and punctuality by developing and maintaining positive relationships with students and parents.

POLICY

7. Students are required to attend school in accordance with current legislation.

8. During the term time the official opening time of school each weekday is from 8.55am to 3.50pm. This does not include breakfast clubs or after school clubs and activities. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the School of the specific reason for non-attendance by telephone (01722 333851) or e-mail (rec@bishopwordsworths.org.uk) on the first day of absence and every day of absence thereafter. Parents of Sixth Form Students should report their son/daughter's absence at sixthform.absences@bishopwordsworths.org.uk. Sixth form students can self-report their own absence in the case of medical appointments, with accompanying evidence.

REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

9. Leave of absence during term time may not be granted unless in exceptional circumstances: absence for family holidays is specifically not permitted. Taking leave without permission will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal proceedings by the Local Authority.

10. Parents are reminded that any requests for leave of absence should be made within the terms of the Home-School Partnership Agreement and that there is good evidence for a direct link between attendance and educational attainment and progress.

PROCEDURE

11. The Attendance Register is to be taken by the tutor at the beginning of each morning and in the afternoon is completed automatically from lesson monitor data from the lesson immediately after lunch. Students are to be marked as present or absent. A receptionist or the Attendance Officer is to telephone the parents of any student who arrives in School later than 25 minutes after the registration bell to find out the reason.

12. Lateness is to be recorded with a distinction between lateness before and after registers close (authorised and unauthorised) (see Annex A). Registers are to be open for morning registration from the first bell (8.55am) until the end of registration (9.25am), after which registers close and students are to be marked as late (unauthorised absence). Afternoon registration is to be open for the duration of the period directly after lunch (1.45-2.15pm).

13. Class teachers are to record any absence from lessons. Any serious concerns regarding a student's unexplained absence are to be brought to the attention of the relevant Head of School, reception, and Attendance Officer by the class teacher at the earliest possible time.

14. Registers are to be checked daily by the Attendance Officer who will follow up any issues identified.

15. The Attendance Officer is to telephone the parents of any student who is absent for whom an email, a telephone call or other acceptable notice has not been received as soon as possible after the start of the school day to find out the reason for absence.

16. Once the reason for the absence has been established the appropriate symbol is to be inserted in the Register (see Annex A). The Attendance Officer is to complete appropriate codes for absence. If no valid reason can be given for absence it is to be recorded as unauthorised.

17. If there is reason to believe that a student may be truanting, the circumstances are to be investigated immediately by the relevant Head of School (or their deputy) and a sanction may be applied.

RECORDING

18. The Register must show whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. For the symbols used to record presence or to distinguish between the categories of absence see Annex A.

19. The number of sessions and number of absences are recorded on the School MIS, and parents can view this information in real time online.

20. The Attendance Officer or an administrator is to use data recorded in the registers to produce information on authorised and unauthorised absence for students of statutory school age to be analysed by the Assistant Head (Student Development) and shared with the Leadership Team every half term. This data informs the pastoral team of any cohorts of students who may be in need of specific support to improve attendance and informs future strategy development. A report is presented to Governors annually in July.

21. Persistent lateness, particularly without valid rationale, will be monitored and may result in consequences such as detentions and other sanctions, to reinforce the importance of punctuality.

DATA SHARING

22. The School shares information from its admission and attendance registers with the Local Authority and the Department for Education in line with *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)*. This includes notifying the Local Authority when pupils are added to or removed from the admission register outside normal transition points, providing attendance information for pupils who fail to attend regularly or who have extended unauthorised absence, and submitting sickness information where prolonged illness is expected.

SUPPORTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

23. The Attendance Officer is to produce half termly reports for the Heads of Lower School, Middle School and the Sixth Form, SENDCo and Designated Safeguarding Lead of students with less than 90% attendance. Normally, if a student's attendance falls below 90% over a sustained period, the Attendance Officer, in collaboration with the tutor and the relevant Head of School or their deputy, will contact parents to identify any factors affecting attendance and agree on strategies for improvement. The impact of reduced attendance on the student's learning and social integration will be explained, and ongoing support will be provided by the Attendance Officer and tutor or mentor. All staff involved must record every intervention and communication with the family aimed at improving attendance.

24. The School may request medical evidence of illness when attendance falls below 90% and may convene either a School Attendance Meeting or a Medical Personal Education

Plan meeting, to which the parents are to be invited, in order to elicit all factors affecting the student's attendance. Clear objectives should be set as part of the meeting with the aim of ensuring that the student receives the educational provision to which he or she is entitled. At this stage, the School may contact or access wider support services to help reduce or remove barriers to attendance. If the family declines to attend the meeting the School is to hold the meeting without them. A review meeting is then to be held at a later date to assess if the objectives in the meeting have been met and, if they have not been, the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). From these meetings specific recommendations will be made with an agreed time scale.

25. Parents or students may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. The EWO is independent of the School and will give impartial and helpful advice. Their contact details are available from reception or through the Local Authority. Additionally, parents or students may wish to contact a member of the School pastoral team, such as tutor, Head of Year or Head of School for more detailed support.

26. If all methods of trying to improve attendance have failed and unauthorised absences continue, the School has the right to seek a Fixed Penalty Notice. Furthermore, the EWO has the option to prosecute parents who do not fulfil their duty to see that their children attend school regularly. Legal proceedings may include penalty notices, fines or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

27. In order to prevent children from becoming "Children Missing Education", the School is legally required to notify the Local Authority of all children removed from registers outside normal transfer times, whatever the reason. Parents are requested to provide the School with all the necessary information about future addresses, new schools etc. in the event of planned changes. Any information the School holds will be passed to the relevant Local Authorities as required.

28. Parents must ensure that the School has at least two up-to-date contact numbers in order to be able to pass on relevant information to the parent or guardian, for example when a child does not arrive as expected. This is part of its duty to keep children safe in school.

29. In the case of prolonged absence, re-integration procedures will be used to encourage improvement in attendance:

- a. During absence regular contact is to be maintained with parents and, where appropriate, work is to be set remotely or sent home.
- b. The relevant pastoral office is to be mindful of a student returning to school after prolonged absence and are to be available to support them with catching up on their missed work and helping them to settle back into the School routine.
- c. The School ensures that reintegration plans are tailored to the individual needs of pupils, including those with SEND, health-related needs, or other barriers to attendance. Support may include personalised learning plans, adjustments to timetable or environment, and close liaison with parents and external professionals where appropriate.
- d. Subject teachers are to be informed by the Head of School about a student's return to school and requested to advise students on what they need to catch up on and how best this can be achieved.
- e. Subject teachers are to communicate with parents about missing work and forthcoming deadlines.

CHANGES IN LEGISLATION

30. If, during the currency of this Policy, any statute or statutory instrument is enacted that adds to, modifies or is in conflict with any provisions of the Policy, then the Policy will be deemed to include any such statutory provision to the extent necessary to make the Policy compliant with that provision.

28 th November 2023	Updates in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance
26 th November 2024	Further updates in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance
20 th November 2025	Further updates in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance, August 2024

Annex:

A. Attendance Codes.

ATTENDANCE CODES

This list shows codes which are likely to be used at Bishop Wordsworth's School. A full list of codes can be found in the government document Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)

Present at School

- Λ Present (/ = am \ = pm)
- L Late (before the register has closed)

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

The absence of students taking part in supervised educational activities outside the school is recorded as 'approved educational activity'. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. This is equivalent to 'present' for performance table purposes. However, to avoid confusion in an emergency, schools should not record students who are off-site as present.

- B Off-site educational activity (supervised)
- D Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- J1 At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- P Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience (for students in the final 2 years of compulsory education)

Authorised Absence from School

- C Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance (e.g. bereavement, special occasion)
- C1 Leave of absence authorised by the school for participation in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- C2 Leave of absence for a student subject to a part time timetable
- E Suspended or permanently excluded
- H Holiday authorised by the school
- I Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- M Medical or dental appointments
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- T Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Unauthorised Absence

- G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.
- N Reason for absence not yet provided
- O Absent from school in unknown circumstances
- U Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative Codes

- X Not required to be in school (post-compulsory education)

- Y1 Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption caused by local, national or international emergency
- Y3 Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y7 Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

- Z Student not on admission register
- # Planned whole or partial school closure