

## 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 in order 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, 2022)* 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, 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 Jemima Edney, Deputy Head (Pastoral) (jje@bishopwordsworths.org.uk). The governor with oversight of attendance is Julia Phippard.
6. **Attendance & Punctuality.** The School seeks to encourage good attendance and punctuality through tutorial work and assemblies, and through 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. Sixth form students can inform the Attendance Officer and the Sixth Form Office of their own absence. The School reserves the right to request a signed letter from a parent to confirm the reason for absence.

### **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 (9.30am), 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).

18. Truanting will be investigated by the appropriate pastoral office and a sanction may be applied.

## **RECORDING**

19. 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.

20. The number of sessions and number of absences are recorded on Bromcom, and parents can view this information in real time using the My Child At School app.

21. 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 Deputy Head (Pastoral) every half term (except for the second half of the Summer 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.

## **SUPPORTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

22. 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 attendance drops below 90% for a period of time the tutor, relevant Head of School or their deputy is to contact parents to discuss any issues that may be affecting their son or daughter's attendance and any strategies to help improve this. The negative effects of this poor attendance on the student's curriculum and social integration is to be discussed and the tutor or mentor is to continue to work with the student to improve attendance. Tutors, mentors and Heads of School are to record all interventions with the family that have been taken in order to improve attendance.

23. 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.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. 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.

#### **28. Re-integration Procedures.**

- a. If a student has been absent for a prolonged illness, 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. 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.
- d. Subject teachers are to communicate with parents about missing work and forthcoming deadlines.

#### **CHANGES IN LEGISLATION**

29. 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.

#### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

30. The Governing Body, advised by Leadership Team, will review this Policy annually.

31. It was first adopted by Governors on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1995. The most recent 3 years' review history is below:

1 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	Minor updates
12 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Minor updates
2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2022	Minor updates
28 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	Updates in line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Annex:

A. Attendance Codes.

## **ATTENDANCE CODES**

### **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
- J 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 authorised by the school (to be recorded) (eg: Bereavement, agreed special occasion, performances, other approved absence not covered by other codes)
- E Excluded but no alternative provision made
- 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 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

### **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 without authorisation
- U Arrived in school after registration closed

### **Administrative Codes**

- X Not required to be in school (post-compulsory education)
- Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (eg school site closed, transport not available, local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel)
- Z Student not on admission register
- # Planned whole or partial school closure