



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
Aims.....	3
Roles and Responsibilities	3
Understanding types of absence.....	6
Registration Practice	7
Guidance on Children Missing Education (DFE 2016)	8
Working with the Educational Welfare Officer.....	8
Persistent Absenteeism (PA).....	9
Holidays in Term Time.....	9
Emergency Procedures.....	9

This policy has been written and implemented in accordance with the School's dedication to its Christian values. These are underpinned in the Stopfordian ethos and the message and example of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

We as a school believe that central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential is an assumption that students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to improve overall attendance rates and punctuality rates for pupils to ensure that all pupils receive the highest quality education and that through this they are able to develop the skills necessary for future employment.

This school aims to:-

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

Attendance Lead

- Work with the Headteacher to agree the attendance targets.
- Ensure that there is a clear attendance policy.
- Ensure that all staff are aware that attendance is their responsibility.
- Ensure that accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.
- Ensure that attendance data is accurate, analysed and reported on a regular basis.
- Encourage a positive and proactive ethos within the school, by which attendance is prioritised, promoted and embedded in school policies, plans practices and processes.
- Ensure that the school has a range of strategies that are applied consistently to promote whole school attendance.
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer whenever necessary.
- Monitor attendance weekly.
- Supervise the Attendance Officer and ensure that the required action is taken at each level.
- Meet pupils and parents/carers to discuss attendance and punctuality issues and devise effective strategies to improve attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Officer

- Ensure administrative system is effective, organised and accurate.
- Follow the school's procedures for first day calling.
- Seek explanations from parents/carers for absence.
- Issue attendance letters where and when required.
- Hold regular discussions with the Attendance Lead. Ensure the system works. Come up with suggestions to improve it.
- Inform the Head of Year/Attendance Lead if a Form tutor is failing to maintain their registers correctly.
- Assist the Attendance Lead/Headteacher and others in collating data necessary for documents such as reports or attendance returns.
- Check and file all absence notes that are received, and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer whenever necessary
- Attend attendance meetings with Heads of Year/Attendance Lead and Educational Welfare Officer.
- Pass messages from parents/carers to appropriate staff.
- Attend meetings with parents/carers if required by Attendance Lead and /or Year Curriculum Co-ordinator.

Head of Year

- Promote the ethos of the attendance and punctuality policy through assemblies and rewards.
- Ensure that tutors are following school's procedures in dealing with absences and lateness.
- Meet with Attendance Officer to discuss specific pupils and intervention strategies to be used and to provide feedback on interventions.
- Analyse attendance data for the year group, and co-ordinate the responses and interventions with form tutors and Attendance Officer.

- Make a personal connection with parents/carers and students who have regular unauthorised absence, or patterns of irregular attendance.
- Ensure the Attendance Lead is informed of your concerns over the attendance/punctuality of specific pupils.
- Ensure pupils who are absent for any length of time are provided with appropriate academic work, that it is completed, returned and marked.
- Ensure form tutors in their year team are recording attendance accurately and discuss any issues with the recording of registers with the form tutor in the first instance. If issues persist to liaise with the Attendance Lead.
- Ensure that all casual entrants are familiar with the school's expectations on attendance and punctuality.

Form Tutor

- Ensure accurate electronic registration takes place between 8.30-8.55am and 3.00pm.
- Ensure that registers are completed and the correct code is used. Never leave blank spaces.
- If it is not possible to complete electronic register - e.g. if at assembly, to complete a paper register and ensure it is taken to the main office by 9.00am.
- Look carefully at attendance data for their tutor group. Spot patterns of absence and overall levels of attendance of individuals.
- Use attendance and punctuality data as part of learning conversations with pupils and parents/carers.
- Ensure that the Head of Year is kept informed about concerns over attendance, as well as the interventions taken by the form tutor.
- Promote the ethos of the attendance and punctuality policy through registration periods, make 100% the expectation.
- Provide a positive welcome to students with poor attendance and support the student in catching up with missed work.

Special Needs Coordinator

- To monitor attendance of all pupils on the SEND Register and refer to the appropriate member of staff any concerns about attendance and/or punctuality.

Subject Teachers

- Do not accept poor attendance. Make 100% attendance the expectation.
- Ensure that registers are completed accurately and at the start of the lesson.
- Follow up absence/truancy.
- Liaise with Head of Department and Head of Year regarding students with poor attendance/poor punctuality.
- Ensure appropriate and challenging work is provided for students who are absent for any length of time.
- Provide a positive welcome to students with poor attendance and support the student in catching up with missed work.

Parents/Carers

- To ensure that their child attends school every day, unless there is a valid reason not to e.g. illness, work experience.
- Ensure that their child arrives to school on time.
- To contact the school by telephoning our attendance line 0208 216 1772 on the first day of absence, stating the reason for their child's absence and the date they are expected to return to school.
- To write a note when their child returns to school explaining the absence.
- Make medical appointments outside of school time.
- Ensure that no request for holiday leave during term time is made.

- To seek help from the school if requiring assistance in improving their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Support the school and the Educational Welfare Officer in strategies to improve the attendance and punctuality levels of their child, including attending meetings and engaging with outside agencies.

Students

- To ensure that they attend school regularly and on time unless there is a valid reason not to.
- To inform their form tutor and bring in note from home to explain any absences.
- To inform their classroom teachers if an absence is known in advance and to make sure they ask for work to complete, and they do complete the work.
- To catch up on missed work on return.
- If they are late to school to go to the main office to receive their mark before going to their lesson.

Understanding types of absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

Examples of Authorised Absence are:

- Illness which results in the student being unable to attend school.
- Family bereavement.
- Homelessness.
- An interview with a prospective employer, higher education institution or at another school.
- Study leave granted by the Headteacher.
- Exclusion.
- School trip. Participation in an approved activity or work experience.
- A day set aside exclusively for religious observance.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence are:

- No explanation being provided by the parent/carer.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- Staying at home to mind the house, await deliveries or look after sibling/siblings or other family members.
- The school follow up procedures show that the student truanted and the parent/carer was unaware of the absence until informed by the school.
- Students who arrive at school after registration is closed.
- Day trips or a family holiday during term time which has not been agreed.
- Translating for a family member.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child.

If a child is absent parents/carers must:-

Contact school as soon as possible on 0208 216 1772

Registration Practice

All students are registered electronically; on occasions when the network is unavailable a written register is taken and made available immediately to our Attendance Officer.

All students are expected to arrive at school no later than 8.30 am each morning. Any student arriving after this time will be expected to serve a lunchtime detention that afternoon.

- Students are registered by Form Tutors at 8.30 am students arriving to their form room 5 minutes or more after that time will be marked late.
- Any student arriving after 8.55 am must report to the Attendance Officer in the main school office. **Registers are closed at 9.30 am each day, any student arriving after that time without a written note will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.**
- Afternoon registration takes place at 3.00 pm. Students who are not present at line-up to be registered at that time will be marked as late. Students who fail to attend afternoon registration will be marked as absent.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to telephone the school to explain absence on the first day of absence. When a student returns to school following a period of absence parents must provide a signed and dated note to cover the whole period of absence. This note should be given to the Form Tutor. The Attendance Officer will record the reason for absence onto the school system. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to prove that their child is unfit for school it is the school's decision as to whether the reason given for absence will be authorised or not.

The Attendance Officer records any telephone messages received on the first day of absence.

Form Tutors should draw to the attention of the Head of Year any unusual reason or regularly repeated reason for absence or lateness.

Each half day (each session) of absence must be classified as either authorised or unauthorised. The school reserves the right to ask for further details and/or supporting evidence, for absence which would normally be authorised, where overall attendance is a cause for concern or where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging.

Practice to follow up absence

- Parents are requested to telephone the Attendance Officer when a student is absent.
- The Attendance Officer makes a 'first-day absence' phone call and may also generate a SMS text message to inform of absence
- Written notification as mentioned above and parental notes are recorded.
- The Attendance Officer maintains a list of students who are known to have truanted and/or have a poor attendance record and makes these the priority for first day absence calling.
- The Attendance Officer will contact as many families identified by the Heads of Year and EWO on the first day of absence as time permits.
- If a student is seen leaving the premises during a school session or is not in a lesson having registered for a session, the Attendance Officer will contact parents once it is clear the student is not on the premises.

If an explanation for absence is not received and unexplained absence continues, the following staged procedure is followed:-

- The Form Tutor asks for a note to explain an absence.
- The Form Tutor asks a second time for a note to explain and absence and writes the dates of the unexplained absence in the student's planner with a note requesting an explanation.
- If no explanation is received the Attendance Officer will generate a text message requesting an explanation for the absence to be sent home to parents.

- Absences which have not been explained will remain unauthorised; this may trigger a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Guidance on Children Missing Education

Bishop Stopford's School fully embraces the requirements of the DFE Children Missing Education Guidance in relation to our attendance policy.

Where pupils are missing from school parents or carers are immediately contacted (morning of the first day of absence). If no satisfactory response is forthcoming, the absence is reported to the school's Safer Schools Officer and Targeted Youth Worker. This is also the case where pupils are missing during the school day.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

Where a parent notifies a school that a pupil will live at another address, all schools are required to record in the admission register:

- the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- the new address; and
- the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools must record in the admission register:

- the name of the new school; and
- the date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

The Designated Teacher and/or Deputy Designated Teacher is also informed of these types of absence so that effective monitoring and action may be put in place.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

All staff should also note that in exceptional circumstances, such as in emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can speak directly to children's social care for the relevant borough.

Working with the Educational Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) undertakes preventative (clinic) work and caseload (formally referred) work with and on behalf of the school. If the student's attendance continues to deteriorate, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare service at the Local Authority. He/she will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Education Welfare Officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court on the advice of the Headteacher. Parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will

give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. We monitor the absence of persistent absentee students thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority and parents will be informed by the school's Attendance Officer of any absence from school (First Day Call). A medical certificate may then be requested (copy of prescription or medication could be sufficient) and in these circumstances work will be set and provided for the student by the school for any long term absence. PA pupils will be tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and monitored by the Lead Attendance member of staff.

Holidays in Term Time

1. Leave of absence during term time is not normally granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. As advised from the Local Authority evidence will be needed e.g. a Death Certificate.
2. Parents will be informed that any absence taken without permission will be unauthorised and that this could be used by the Local Authority to strengthen a case for penalty notice/prosecution where overall attendance is unsatisfactory.

Legal action to enforce school attendance (DFE)

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. Other possible action includes:

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a fire an attendance list is taken out of the building and circulated to Form Tutors and Heads of Year to ensure a full emergency registration takes place. In addition to the practice of student presence being noted by the Attendance Officer in the event of lateness, all students must sign out and in if leaving the school premises during the day for whatever reason. Such signing out is undertaken by reception staff upon receipt of a dated and signed parental note verified by a Form Tutor or Head of Year's signature or a note from the Head of Year indicating that the appointment has been verified by telephone if the student has forgotten a note. Students who are unwell report to Main School Office where they are assessed. Students who are unwell and need to leave school will have arrangements made by the designated office staff including contacting parents, and ensuring students have appropriate transport arrangements. Only designated staff make a decision to send a student home for sickness. If a student leaves school without the permission of the designated staff even if collected by a parent, the absence will not be authorised. If

the member of staff has decided that a student should be sent home, the time at which they are collected by parents and leave the premises is noted in the same book at reception.

For students on a reduced, work-related timetable the Attendance Officer holds their timetables centrally for checking in the event of a school evacuation. Fire procedures for staff/adult visitors are dealt with separately.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or Department for Education is updated by the Deputy Headteacher in charge of school attendance.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: pupil absence codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
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Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) (This code is not counted as an absence in the school census)

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care¹² or
- any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Schools should also continue to use code X to record when a pupil not of compulsory school age is not expected to attend