

BISHOP VESEY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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| Review prepared by: | Deputy Head Teacher |
| Review date/by whom | Learning and Teaching Committee October 2019 Full Board of Governors 7 September 2020 |
| School's next review date/by whom: | Autumn 2021 by Learning and Teaching Committee |
| Signed by Chair of the Governing Board 7/9/2020 | |



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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy is written with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of The Child in Mind. All of our policies bear in mind Articles 3 and 28 - the child's best interests and the right of the child to an education.

BVGS is a successful school, with each individual playing their part to make it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For the young people in our care to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly.

Every student is expected to be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

1.1 Why is regular attendance so important?

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

It is a parent/carer's legal responsibility to ensure a child's regular attendance and punctuality at school. Parents/carers who take their children out of school during term-time without the school's authorisation, or beyond an agreed date, risk:

- losing their child's place at this School
- being taken to court and fined, or being given a fixed penalty notice
- their child's future through missed learning and lower achievement
- their child feeling left behind or left out

1.2 Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents/carers, students and all members of the school staff.

1.3 To help us all to focus on this:

- A Registration Certificate will be sent home with each academic report to parents/carers. This will inform parents/carers about how their child is performing in school, what their attendance rate is and give guidance on how this relates to their attainment.
- The school will celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- The school will reward good attendance by awarding:
 - termly certificates and letters to students achieving 100% attendance



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- an end of year certificate for those students achieving 100% attendance throughout the year.

2. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Therefore information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

2.1 Reluctance to attend:

Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, parents/carers are advised to seek guidance and support from the student's Head of Year in the first instance. It is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

2.2 Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. At BVGS we choose to monitor and intervene at 10% in order to maintain high standards of attendance. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and the school needs the full support and co-operation of parents/carers to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.



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PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through the school's pastoral system.

All PA students and their parents/carers are subject to an action plan. The student is set targets to support them to improve attendance, and monitored to chart progress. All PA cases for KS3 and KS4 students are also automatically made known to the Children, Young People and Families department of Birmingham City Council.

PA students in the Sixth Form are monitored internally and not referred to BCC as they are no longer of compulsory school age. Appropriate improvement plans are put in place, often involving parental support, and sometimes involving sanctions.

3. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

3.1 If a student is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

Then:

- On the first day the student returns, send a note or an email (or call into the school) with an explanation of the absence, even if the parents/carers have already telephoned the School previously;

3.2 If a student is absent the school will:

- Telephone or text the parents/carers on the first day of absence if no parental contact is made by 09.20am
- Contact parents/carers to discuss the situation with the relevant Head of Year or Senior Head of Year, if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Children, Young People and Families department of Birmingham City Council if attendance moves below 90%.

4. THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT OF BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (BCC)

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the student to BCC. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the student's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences or lateness persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school.

Alternatively, parents/carers or students may wish to contact BCC themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 0121 303 1888.



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5. LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss registration with their form tutor and not have access to vital information and news for the day. Further, they can miss work from lessons and this can limit their learning and performance. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons which can disrupt the learning of other students.

5.1 How we manage lateness:

Morning Registration

8.20am School opens

Students will make their way to their form rooms or assembly

Late Arrivals before the end of registration or assembly

- The deadline for students to be present is 9.10am
- Students arriving after that time will be marked late
- Students arriving between 9.10am and 9.20am will be marked late with an "L" code SIMS
- Students move to Period 1 at 9.20am

There must be a mark on the SIMS register against every student's name.

The plastic registration wallet should be returned to the Main School Office by 9.15am.

9.20am Start of Period 1. Students will be at their first lesson of the day.

Late Arrivals after morning registration

- Students arriving after 9.20am will go straight to their lesson, where the teacher will record them as late on SIMS.
- At 9.40am the register will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. An absence note will be requested from parents/carers.
- Students who have attended a doctor/dentist/medical appointment will be given an "M" mark on SIMS after staff have received a letter/note from home.
- If a student arrives late to a lesson, staff are asked to ensure that the student has signed in.



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5.2 Sanctions for Lateness

- Every day our registers are analysed by the main school office for attendance and punctuality. If a student has been marked late for a third occasion in a school term, then they are issued with a school detention. Parents are informed by email through the school's information management systems. This is in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- All lateness is shared directly with Form Tutors and Heads of Year every 2 weeks. Form Tutors are expected to follow up any queries with students and with parents at this stage. In some cases this may be escalated to the Head of Year.
- If a student has a persistent late record (ten or more lates) the relevant Head of Year will meet with the student to set targets for improved punctuality, and make contact with parents/carers to outline the concern. The school will refer the situation to BCC to help in resolving the problem.
- If a student continues to be late after targets have been set for expected punctuality, the student and their parents/carers will be asked to meet with the relevant Head of Year and/or Assistant or Deputy Head in charge of KS3/KS4/their Year Group needed to resolve the problem.
- Parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their son or daughter to school on time.

Warning Meeting.

- Any student who has double figure of lateness since the start of the school year and one late in the past 2 weeks will be called to a warning meeting with the Assistant or Deputy Headteacher in charge of Attendance for their Year Group.

5.3 Afternoon Registration:

2.00pm **Students** are whistled in by the lunchtime supervisors and duty staff so that they can collect their books for afternoon school.

2.05pm **Registration** begins (during Period 5)



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6. ASSEMBLIES AND MEETINGS

All physical assemblies will not take place during the COVID-19 crisis

| | ASSEMBLY in BIG SCHOOL 08:35 | ASSEMBLY in BIG SCHOOL 13:15 | GAMES |
|-----------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| MONDAY | Y7 | | 10 |
| TUESDAY | Y9 | Y13 | 9 |
| WEDNESDAY | Y11 | | Senior |
| THURSDAY | Y8 | Y12 | 8 |
| FRIDAY | Y10 | | 7 |

For assemblies:

- Students will be in place in Big School and registered by 5 minutes after the start time.
- Students arriving more than 5 minutes after the start time will be marked late as for morning registration.
- Students will be seated according to the form tutors' seating plan so any absent students are easy to spot.
- The form tutor will complete the register at the start of assembly and send it to the school office immediately after assembly.

For afternoon registration:

- Students will be in their forms and registered by 2.05pm.
- Students arriving after that time are late.
- Form tutors will use the afternoon registration period to chase up any late arrivals from the morning and update the SIMS registers as appropriate.
- Registers are to be returned to the school office.

For Games sessions:

All Games sessions will run from 14:05 during the COVID-19 crisis.

Years 7 -10

Top Game students and those involved in fixtures:

1. The Director of Sport, Chris Howell will produce a list of students involved who will not be at normal registration



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2. This list will be published on the MS notice board and passed on to tutors and the MSO
3. These students will meet with their Games teacher and be registered by them at 13:50
4. The Games teacher will be responsible for informing the MSO office of any absence at the start of the session

All other students:

1. Registration will take place in the form room as normal
2. Students are to be in their form rooms for 13:50 and registration will end at 14:05
3. Students will then move to their designated Games teacher for 14:10 at the Pavilion/Sports Hall as directed
4. Each Games teacher will take a register at the start of their session, which will be kept for reference as necessary

Years 11-13

For all on site and off site activities supervised by a member of staff:

- All students in Years 11-13 must report to the member of staff in charge of their activity for registration.
- Failure to do so will result in an absence being recorded in the register, and a letter to your tutor will be required from home to explain your absence.
- PE/Games staff must register their group at the start of the session and report absentees to the MSO asap, and before the activity commences. All students must be accounted for.
- MSO will call the parents of any student reported absent.

In addition, for all off site activities supervised by a member of staff:

- Students must register with the teacher in charge of their off-site activity by 14:20
- Failure to do so will result in an absence being recorded in the register, and a letter to your tutor will be required from home to explain your absence.
- Staff in charge of activities off site will report absence information for their activity to the MSO by 14:35.
- MSO will call the parents of any student reported absent.



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For all off site, unsupervised activities:

- Students in Years 11 -13 who attend a Games activity not supervised by a member of staff, must report to the MSO to sign out before they leave the BVGS premises.
- They must gain official, dated proof of attendance at their activity.
- This must be presented to their tutor at Thursday morning registration for the present mark to be awarded in the register.
- Failure to do so will result in an absence being recorded and a letter will be required from home.
- If a student cannot follow this procedure, their choice of Games option will be changed.

Non-participation in PE/Games due to Illness or Injury

- Non-participation in PE/Games must be supported by a parental letter, preferably in the planner, to explain.
- Long term problems need to be supported with a medical note.

7. ABSENCES IN TERM TIME

Request for future absences of part of a school day for medical appointments etc should be made in writing to the form tutor.

Requests for future absence of other types should be made, well in advance, in writing to the Headteacher. This includes holidays and religious festivals.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's schooling as much as any other absence. The school expects parents/carers not to take students away in school time. Financial savings made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a student's education. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. It is important that parents/carers understand that leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

8. SCHOOL TARGETS, PROJECTS AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES

The school has targets to improve attendance and each student has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **97%** attendance.



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The school will keep students, parents/carers and staff updated regularly about progress to this level and how each student's attendance compares.

Throughout the school year the Heads of Year and Assistant or Deputy Head in charge of each Key stage will monitor absences and punctuality to identify where improvements need to be made.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Each form tutor

Heads of Year 7-13

Assistant or Deputy Headteachers in charge of each Key Stage

9. SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Temporary Variations due to COVID-19

It is the government's stated intention that all students should return to school full time from September 2020 and that statutory mandatory attendance requirements will resume from this date. The school's attendance policy will therefore resume operation in full from September 2020.

Due to temporary alterations to school day timings in response to health and safety recommendations from government, the following temporary alterations to timings within this document will apply:

3.2 The expected time for parental contact is adjusted to 9:20am

5.1 The school opening time will change to 08:20am

The following deadlines for arrival will apply:

Y11: 08:30am

Y7: 08:40am

Y8: 08:50am

Y9: 09:00am

Y10: 09:05am

Y12: 09:10am



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Y13: 09:20am

Start of first lesson: 09:20am

Students arriving after 09:20am will report to MSO.

At 09:40am the register will be closed.

5.3 Afternoon Registration will take place at the beginning of Period 5 (2:05pm)

The Registrar programme will be temporarily suspended to prevent contact between students in different year group bubbles.

6. All Assemblies are suspended, and Games sessions will begin at 2:05pm