

# BISHOP VESEY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

<b>Review prepared by:</b>	Deputy Head Teacher
<b>Review date/by whom</b>	Learning and Teaching Committee October 2021
<b>School's next review date/by whom:</b>	Autumn 2022
<b>Signed by Chair of the Governing Board</b>	



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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.

The School also tracks our Attendance in relation to other Schools through the use of FFT Attendance Trackers

### 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/arers 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.

It is the responsibility of the School to record attendance and follow up absence.

Unless there is written evidence a child is medically advised to shield – all children should be in School

The School will write to the 'parent body, at the start of each Academic Year outlining the importance of healthy attendance and the procedures put in place in support of this goal.



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## 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
  - an end of year certificate for those students achieving 100% attendance throughout the year.
  - The School also runs a fortnightly Attendance Competition, where the Form with the highest average attendance over a two-week period are rewarded with a 'Form Prize'.

## 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 that 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:



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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 persistently absent, meaning when they miss 10 per cent or more of school sessions**

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

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.

Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

At BVGS, we monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. We use standardised Attendance trackers that highlight students who are 'persistent absentees', to include all interventions and patterns of improvement or decline in attendance figures

In the first instance, we are very eager to work with families as a means of systematically removing barriers to attendance.



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## 2.21

### Stage 1 Persistent Absenteeism

- The Heads of Key Stage & Senior Head of Year (KS3) will be presented with attendance information on a Half-Termly basis. This should be presented via e-mail on the penultimate Friday of each Half-Term to allow interventions the following week.
- Information should provide individual % attendance figures, Year Group Averages, with Persistent Absenteeism highlighted.
- The reports should also highlight % figures for Pupil Premium, SEN and children who speak English as a second language.

Patterns in Attendance are analysed at Key Stage Meetings. In the first instance, Parents/Carers will be informed through a 'Stage 1 Attendance Letter' from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) that their son's Attendance has fallen below .90% for a fixed period of time of no less than 6 School weeks.

The decision to send any 'Attendance Correspondence, will be taken after a meeting involving Head of Key Stage, Head of Year and Assistant Headteacher (Safeguarding). All ongoing authorised absences and pastoral issues will be considered. . If there are other difficulties affecting a student's ability to attend, all parents/carers are offered an Early Help Assessment and are encouraged to urgently to arrange a meeting with us

## **2.22**

### **Stage 2 Persistent Absenteeism**

If after the initial Stage 1 Attendance Letter is sent and there is no improvement in the Attendance figures, a follow up letter is sent to outline that Attendance has not improved over the last Half Term. If there are other difficulties affecting a student's ability to attend, all parents/carers are offered an Early Help Assessment and are encouraged to urgently to arrange a meeting with us

## **2.23**

### **Stage 3 Persistent Absenteeism**

If after the first two stages of interventions have not positively impacted upon attendance, the following should be arranged:3



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Parents and students may be invited to a 'Student Attendance Review Meeting'. In this meeting, we will agree a range of strategies aimed at improving the attendance of your son/daughter.

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.

## **2.24**

### **Stage 4 Persistent Absenteeism**

If after the first 3 stages of Intervention have been followed and no discernible improvement has been made, then the case will be referred to Birmingham Council Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT)

## **3. ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

### **3.1 If a student is absent parents/carers must:**

- Parents should contact school by 08:45 on the first day and subsequent days of absence to explain the reason for absence.
- At 09:40 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 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.
- On returning from absence due to illness, as student must bring an explanatory note to his or her form tutor on the day of his or her return.
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- **Then:**

### **3.2 If a student is absent the school will:**



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- 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;
- A 'third day call will be made to all parents/carers even if the absence has been reported

#### **4. THE BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (BCC) EDUCATION LEGAL INTERVENTION TEAM (ELIT)**

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.

#### **5. LATENESS**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss registration or assembly 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**

**8.00am** School opens for approved activities

**From 8.25am, students are permitted to make their way to Form Rooms**

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 8.45am
- Students arriving after that time will be marked late
- Students arriving between 8.45am and 9.05am will be marked late with an "L" code SIMS



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- Students move to Period 1 at 9.00am for a 9.05am start.

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 9.05am.

**9.05am**      **Start of Period 1.** Students will be at their first lesson of the day.

## **Late Arrivals after morning registration**

- Students arriving after 9.05am will go straight to their lesson, where the teacher will report 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.

## **5.2 Sanctions for Lateness**

- Every day our registers are analysed by the main school office for attendance and punctuality.
- 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.
- Phase 1 –if a student is late for the third time in a Half Term, that student will be issued with a 'same day' detention of 20 minutes. This detention will be completed from 3.15pm to 3.35pm in Old Big School.
  - All subsequent recorded 'late marks' for the remainder of that Half Term, will also be sanctioned with a 'same day' 20 minute detention.
  - Students arriving after 9.05am will go straight to their lesson, where the teacher will report them as late on SIMS.
  - Whilst we acknowledge that there are often good reasons for students being late to School, this revised system is intended to challenge, sanction



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and modify the behaviours of students who are habitually late to School and to the start of lessons

- When a student reaches the threshold of three 'late marks' for the Half Term, they will be invited to attend a meeting with the Head of Year, where targets and strategies for improving punctuality will be agreed.
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- Phase 2 -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/KS5.
- Parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their son or daughter to school on

## 6. ASSEMBLIES AND MEETINGS

8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45
Big School	Big School	Dining Hall	Big School	Big School	Big School	Dining Hall
Y13	Y12	Y10	Y7	Y9	Y8	Y11
Monday	Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	

### For assemblies:

- All Assemblies start at 8.45am. Students arriving after 8.45am will be marked as late.
- 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 registered in their Period 5 lesson at 2.05pm.
- Students arriving after that time are late.

### For Games sessions:

**All Games sessions will run from 14:05 for Academic Year 2021/22**



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## Years 7 -10

1. For students on Games, they will be registered at 14.05, in their Form Rooms, at the Pavilion or on the STEM Playground as directed by the Games Department.
2. If a student or students are absent from the start of a lesson, then it is the responsibility of the member of Staff to inform the Main School Office
3. **If any Student is involved in a Sports fixture, which involves them missing academic lessons, the member of Staff in charge of a fixture under the direction of the Director of Sport will be responsible for ensuring the following:**
  - All Team Lists will be e-mailed to Academic Staff, at least 24 hours before a fixture.
  - All Team Lists will be posted on [www.schoolsports.com](http://www.schoolsports.com) at least 24 hours before a fixture.
  - All Team Lists will be posted on Microsoft Teams Channels at least 24 hours before a fixture.

It is the responsibility of the Team Manager and Director of Sport to inform parents/carers regarding School fixtures, including approximate 'Return Times' following fixtures. This information should be available at [www.schoolsports.com](http://www.schoolsports.com) at least 24 hours before a fixture.

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## 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.



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- 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.

## **For all off site, unsupervised activities:**

- Students in Years 12 -13 who attend a Games activity not supervised by a member of staff, must 'scan out' prior to leaving the site.
- They must gain official, dated proof of attendance at their activity.
- The KS5 Attendance Officer collates lists for all KS5 Enrichment Activities and will carry out regular 'spot checks' regarding student attendance to these activities.

## **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**

Schools are responsible for monitoring their pupils attendance and, where appropriate, the local authority has a duty to prosecute parents in the Magistrates Court for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution. It requires the parents(s) to pay a fixed amount as a fine for the child's irregular attendance to avoid a court appearance.



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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, by completing 'The Term Time Leave Request Form', which can be located in the 'Parents' section of the School website. 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.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Exceptional circumstances do not include family holidays, visiting relatives or friends, attending sporting activities, looking after family members or family celebrations.

If a parental/carer request for 'Term Time' absence is denied, the parent/carer will receive an official reply from the Headteacher explaining our decision as a School not to authorise term time absence.

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.

## **Sixth Form 'Home Study' and 'Signing Out' arrangements**

Sixth Form Students can only be awarded 'Home Study Privileges' based on the approval of the Head of Sixth Form and Assistant Heads of Sixth Form. Students cannot leave School before the end of Period 4 unless given permission to do so by the Head of Sixth Form/Assistant Heads of Sixth Form.

'Home Study Privileges' can be revoked at any stage based on academic commitment/attainment of a specific student. A student who has their 'Home Study Privileges' revoked will be officially timetabled in a 'Sixth Form Study Room'.

Whenever, a Sixth Former leaves the site before the end of the School Day, they are required to 'scan out' using the Biometric System.



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If a student leaves the School Site and then returns before the end of School, they are required to 'scan in' using the Biometric System.

## **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.

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:**

Every member of Staff

Heads of Year 7-13

Assistant or Deputy Headteachers in charge of each Key Stage

Key Stage Attendance Officers

## **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.