



BISHOP SCHOOL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality

Review prepared by:	Deputy Head Teacher
Review date/by whom	Learning and Teaching Committee October 2023
School's next review date/by whom:	October 2024

1. ATTENDANCE MATTERS: OUR TARGET AS A SCHOOL: 97%

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

We expect all students including those categorised as Disadvantaged or SEND (referred to as Vulnerable throughout) to achieve at least 97% attendance. We recognise that for some this may be a challenging target; therefore, we will provide additional support to students and their families to encourage excellent attendance. Our aim is to ensure that we reduce any gaps between vulnerable and non-vulnerable attendance figures.

1.1 Attendance Matters- the Main Principles

There is a direct link between attendance and attainment at school. Bishop Vesey's Grammar School is therefore committed to working with parents and carers to ensure all students achieve as high a level of attendance as possible. Students are set a target of achieving at least 97% attendance.

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. Students should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence and legal action may be taken by the Local Authority.

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 5 days or more where they have been unable to contact the parent/carer/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Local Support Team.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day and this shows whether a student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a student at compulsory school age is absent, as either authorised or unauthorised. The decision lies with school as to whether an absence will be authorised. For this reason, information about the cause of absence is always required.

1.2 The effect on attendance

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	51 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	102 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	153 lessons

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: parents and carers, students and all members of the school staff. It is the responsibility of the School to record attendance and follow up absence.

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

1.3 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

Whole-school attendance officer

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 promote good attendance by issuing termly letters to all students regarding their attendance and 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

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. 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, music examinations, that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Head Teachers may not authorise leave **during term** except where the circumstances are exceptional.

Please remember that parental illness, looking after other children, birthdays, absences that have not been properly explained, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, a reluctance to attend school, alleged bullying, day trips and family holidays are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as

unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. This may include alleged bullying. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out immediately 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 your child from attending. This gives pupils the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies, which are being dealt with by adult family members.

Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

Parents/carers are able to request permission to take their children out of school during term time where there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. An application form should be requested from the Whole School Attendance Officer, Mrs J Brown (attendance@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk) at least 2 weeks before they are due to leave.

Request for leave can only be authorised by the Head Teacher and the outcome of the request will be communicated to parents/carers.

Where a request has been denied or a request has not been submitted but the absence still occurs, the school may take legal action in the form of a Penalty Notice.

3. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If a student is going to be absent from school due to illness or a medical appointment, then a parents/carer must follow the expectations below:

Parents/carers should call school on 0121 250 5400 or email attendance@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk by 08:30 on each day of absence to explain the reason for absence. The parent/carer will need to explain fully the reason for their child's illness. We are unable to accept single word responses such as unwell or ill.

Failure to report a child's illness before 8.30am may result in a truancy message being sent home, phone calls from the attendance team and an unauthorised absence mark.

If a parent/carer does receive a truancy message, they must reply swiftly to support the safeguarding procedures the school is required to follow.

The Headteacher may require further evidence to authorise an absence and if this is the case the attendance team will be in contact. Medical evidence will be required in cases of illness which are 5 continuous days or longer.

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.

Where possible, parents are required to arrange appointments outside of school hours, e.g. dentist, doctor. If this is not possible, parents should notify attendance@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk prior to the appointment.

When emailing Mrs Brown please include any appointment evidence to support the absence such as:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- An appointment letter from a professional such as hospital consultant or psychologist
- Print screen of a text message appointment

If evidence is not provided, then the absence may be marked as unauthorised until evidence is provided.

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, a student must bring an explanatory note to his or her form tutor on the day of his or her return.

If a student is absent, the School will:

- Telephone or text the parents/carers on each 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

4. COLLECTING STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL FOR ILLNESS OR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

If your son/daughter needs to leave school due to illness or has a medical appointment they will need to be collected by a parent/carer which is registered on our system. We are unable to release students without the presence of a parent/carer.

5. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)

As a school, we are concerned about any child or young person who may be missing education because in addition to their educational development, their safety and well-being may be at risk.

The Birmingham City Council Children Missing from Education (CME) team works jointly with schools in respect of pupils on roll at school, who are absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown. This might be

A child who is not at their last known address and

Has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or

Has left school suddenly and their destination is unknown. This policy does not cover those children not receiving education due to a family not taking up an offer of a school place from the School Admissions Service

6. HOME EDUCATION AND PARENT/CARER ROLE

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving efficient full-time education. Some parents may elect to home educate their children and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so (unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order). Where a parent notifies the school in writing of their intention to home educate, the school must inform the local authority using the Birmingham City Council EHE referral form, before deleting the child from its admission register.

7. REGISTRATION AND PUNCTUALITY

For safeguarding purposes, a register is taken at the start of the school day and each lesson. Each student will receive two registration marks throughout the day, an AM and PM registration. These two registration marks contribute to a student's overall attendance percentage.

If a student has not arrived to their lesson but has been present throughout the day the member of staff should ask for SLT On Call.

It is a student's responsibility to ensure they have informed their teacher at the start of the lesson if they are not going to be in their lesson but are in school.

Morning Registration

- All students are expected to be on site by 8.45am each morning.
- The register is taken in form rooms or assembly between 8.45 and 8.50am.
- Students arriving after the register has been taken (and before 9.05am) will be marked late with an "L" code on SIMS

Late Arrivals after morning registration

Students arriving after 9.05am will need to enter school through reception and speak directly to Main School Office. The student will then 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.

Afternoon registration

Students will receive their afternoon registration mark at the start of their Period 5 lesson. Students are expected to be in their lessons by 2.05pm.

Teachers will use their discretion and may issue a same day 20 minute detention for any student who arrives after 2.10pm.

8. GAMES ATTENDANCE

For Games sessions:

All Games sessions will run from 14:05

Years 7 -10

For students on Games, they will be registered at 14.05, in the TA Block or Sports Hall changing room, at the Pavilion, or on the STEM Playground as directed by the Games Department.

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

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, and the attendance team, at least 24 hours before a fixture.

All Team Lists will be posted on www.bvgssport.co.uk 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.bvgssport.co.uk at least 24 hours before a fixture.

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 14:15

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 14:20.

MSO will call the parents of any student reported absent.

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.

9. SIXTH FORM ATTENDANCE

If a 6th Former has no timetabled lessons for Period 5, they can be awarded home study privileges based on the approval of the Head of Sixth Form and 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’.

Upper Sixth students may also purchase lunch off site at their lunchtime.

Whenever, a Sixth Former leaves the site before the end of the School Day, they are required to ‘scan out’ using the ID card system

If a student leaves the School Site and then returns before the end of School Day, they are required to ‘scan in’ using the ID card system.

10. SANCTIONS FOR SIXTH FORMERS WHO DO NOT 'SCAN IN' OR 'OUT'

A failure to 'scan out' will result in an unauthorised absence

- First offence– students receive a warning and parents receive a phone call
- Second offence - no home study period 5 for one week and parents receive a phone call
- Third offence - no home study period for one month and parents are invited into school for a meeting with their child and their Head of Year.

11. SANCTIONS FOR LATENESS

Throughout the day, our registers are analysed by the main school office for attendance and punctuality.

If a student is late to their lesson teachers will use their discretion and may issue a **next day 20** minute detention.

In exceptional travel circumstances a detention may be cancelled. This will need to be in liaison between the Heads of Years and parents/carers.

There may be other occasions where in liaison with the Heads of Year special consideration for lateness will be granted for a short time and a student will not be sanctioned. Special considerations for lateness will need to be discussed prior to a student's lateness.

Please note that best practice advice is that attendance patterns can only be judged fairly after a minimum of six weeks after the commencement of the start of the school year.

11.1 Phase 1

If a student is late for the third time in a **six week period**, that student will be issued with a **'next 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 the six week, will also be sanctioned with a **'next day'** 20 minute detention.

If a student receives three twenty minute detentions in a six week period, they will be issued with a further one hour detention and a letter sent to parents.

11.2 Phase 2

If a student continues to raise punctuality concerns following the phase 1 punctuality process, parents/carers will be expected to attend a meeting with the relevant Head of Year or Deputy Head (Pastoral) to discuss barriers to punctuality and strategies aimed at overcoming punctuality issues.

Parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their son or daughter to school on time.

12. MANAGING ATTENDANCE (KS3 AND KS4). TARGET 97% ATTENDANCE

Student's attendance will be regularly reviewed, and the following actions could happen to support student's attendance.

Students who are categorised as vulnerable will be targeted first at all stages.

At all stages we want to work with parents/carers to support their child's attendance. The below actions work as a guide only and different support methods may be more suitable for some students.

12.1 Stage 1 Attendance Concern below 97%

School will intervene and offer support utilising some/all of the following:

Communication with student and parents/carers about attendance concerns. This could be in the form of a letter, phone conversation or a meeting.

12.2 Stage 2 Attendance Concern

If a student has 1 or more unauthorised absence and **no acceptable reason** from parents/carers has been given a Stage 2 process may be initiated.

School attendance review with Whole School Attendance Manager and Senior Leader i/c of KS3 or KS4. Action plan completed

12.3 Stage 3 Attendance Concern

Initiated after Stage 2 and in total 10 or more unauthorised absences.

Formal Warning Notice issued by school via post.

School will begin liaison with Local Authority

12.4 Local Authority Referral

If a student has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in total and all previous actions have been followed, the school will seek advice from the Local Authority regarding improving attendance. This is known as FAST TRACK to attendance. This will only be used after each stage has been actioned. If a student is persistently absent due to 'Emotionally-Based School Avoidance' please see that paragraph.

12.5 Formal Warning Notice Stage 3

Parents/carers will receive a formal warning notice advising them of the responsibility to ensure their child is in school under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The formal notice will advise that the Local Authority may consider issuing

a penalty notice/taking legal action against you should there be any further unauthorised absence.

You will also receive an up to date attendance print out and a copy of the FAST TRACK legal action information for parents.

12.6 Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT) Referral – Stage 4

Following the Formal Warning Notice, if a student continues to have any unauthorised absence sessions, then the school will complete the ELIT fast track referral which may result in a penalty notice being issued to the parent/carer or in cases where two penalty notices have been issued, Court proceedings will be initiated via the 'Single justice' procedure.

13. MANAGING ATTENDANCE (KS5): TARGET 97% ATTENDANCE

Student's attendance will be regularly reviewed, and the following actions could happen to support student's attendance.

Students who are categorised as vulnerable will be targeted first at all stages.

At all stages we want to work with parents/carers to support their child's attendance. The below actions work as a guide only and different support methods may be more suitable for some students.

13.1 Stage 1 Attendance Concern below 97%

School will intervene and offer support utilising some/all of the following:

- Communication with student and parents/carers about attendance concerns. This could be in the form of a letter, phone conversation or a meeting.
- Letter of concern sent home explaining consequences regarding exam entry.

13.2 Stage 2 Attendance Concern

School attendance review with Whole School Attendance Manager and Senior Leader KS5 (L.Rackham). Action plan completed.

13.3 Stage 3 Attendance Concern

Student is classified as a persistent absentee. School attendance review with Whole School Attendance Manager and Senior Leader KS5 (L.Rackham). Action plan completed.

14. EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

Where parents are engaging proactively with school to improve a student's attendance, but the student is reluctant due to emotional barriers such as anxiety and worry, challenging thoughts, emotions and self-care, then we involve Forward Thinking Birmingham.

There are resources available for parents/carers to support their sons/daughter's attendance due to emotionally based needs: <https://bwc.nhs.uk/parents-and-carers>

The school will only consider moving past Stage 1 if a parent/carer fails to engage appropriately with efforts to improve their child's attendance.

15. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

A student becomes persistently absent, meaning when they miss 10 per cent or more of school sessions.

Our approach to this matter as a school is informed by the 2022 Department for Education publication, [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school, the school works to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. We always in the first instance prioritise our vulnerable students.

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 doing so, we sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Particular focus is given to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. We are especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and liaise with social care accordingly.

Further information is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

We make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of our regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence are central to our school level strategies for improving attendance.

Our approach can be summarised by the following flow diagram:

