



Bishop David Brown School

# Attendance Policy



UNITY  
SCHOOLS TRUST

Policy Reviewed:	September 2021
Next Review:	September 2024
Approved by Local Governing Body	

## **Introduction**

Bishop David Brown School is committed, in partnership with the parents, students and governors, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

The school firmly believes that regular school attendance is key to achieving the following outcomes; staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. To this end we shall do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

We recognise that the word 'parent' represents an adult with legal responsibility or day-to-day care for the student attending our school.

## **Aims**

### **All students must:**

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss with their form tutor or head of year any problems that deter them from attending school

### **All parents/carers who have day-to-day responsibility for the student will:**

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Support the school procedures for encouraging good attendance
- Ensure that the students arrive at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Ensure that they contact the school on every day of absence or if known in advance, whenever the student is unable to attend school
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the student away from school
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of the student

### **The school will:**

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all students
- Monitor individual student's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents/carers when a student fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition. (See Rewards & Sanctions in Behaviour Policy)

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any student's concerns
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of students who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's expectations with regard to attendance.
- **Use 'Catch up Attendance for Progress' (CAP) sessions to support students who are identified by teachers as at risk of underachievement owing to periods of absence.**
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service.

## Encouraging Attendance

Bishop David Brown School will encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- By responding promptly to a student's or parent/carer's concerns about the school or other students
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics using the BDB Attendance Diamond
- By following up unexplained absences
- By celebrating good and improved attendance – rewards – in the form of Attendance Celebration days, Mufti Days, Certificates, Prizes and House Points.
- By monitoring students using the Attendance Tracker, informing parents in writing of irregular attendance, arranging a meeting with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues
- By requiring students to attend 'Catch up Attendance for Progress' (CAP) sessions beyond the normal school day. These will be administered if students are falling below the 'Yellow, 95% - 96.9% - Risk of underachievement' threshold shown on the Attendance Diamond. Students will be expected to attend CAP sessions as directed by the Head of School. Extended school days, school INSET days and holiday revision sessions may be used.
- By monitoring students, informing parents in writing of irregular attendance, arranging a meeting with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues

No parent can demand leave of absence for his or her children as a right. Although parents offer a note, telephone school or make personal contact regarding absence only the school, within the context of the law, can authorise the absence.

## Procedures

Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with a student's tutor is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time. School begins at 08:30. Registration starts at 08:30 and students who arrive after 08:30 are

late to school. Students who arrive at school between 08:30 and 08:35 should go straight to their form rooms to be registered. The number of minutes late will be electronically recorded. Students who arrive late to school without a valid reason will be placed in a detention which takes place on the same day at break 1.

The late detention will be from 10.40 to 11 am. A note will be placed in the student's planner informing parents/carers. Students who arrive on the school premises after 08.35 must report to reception to be signed in. The office will record that they are present which will inform staff of the time that they have been signed in to school. The close of register is 9:00 am. If a student arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority. Afternoon registration takes place at the beginning of the Period 4 lesson.

Truancy Call is an electronic system that is automatically activated to contact a parent/carer every half hour informing them that their child is not at school. Once the school has been contacted as to the reason for the absence Truancy Call is then deactivated. In the interests of safety this procedure **MUST** be followed.

When a student does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the day of absence if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.20 am the school will contact them that day.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. Concerns over lack of response will be brought to the tutor, head of year or attendance manager. Referral to the Inclusion Service may be made if required.
- In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions verification from a GP or other relevant body will be requested.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action and an application for an Education Supervision Order, Court Prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

### **Leaving School with Permission**

- Parent/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for absence, the time the student will need to leave the premises, the expected return and whether the student is being collected or will make their own way to their destination. On their return to school, students must sign back in at reception.
- The letter will be signed by their form tutor and shown to reception before the student is signed out.
- Students will be issued with the appropriate slip to record the time of leaving, destination and expected return.
- Where a student is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to reception before the student is allowed to leave the site.

### **Leaving School without Permission**

- If a student leaves the school site without permission a member of the Leadership Team should be notified and the school will contact the parent/carer by telephone without undue delay.

- Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate in certain circumstances to contact the Police and register the student as a missing person.

### **Holidays/leave of absence during term time**

- The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. If a family holiday in term time is unavoidable, parent/carers should apply to the Head of School in writing; however it is no longer policy to authorise any absences due to holiday taken during term time. Some exceptional circumstances may be considered when appropriate. The Head of School will then decide whether or not to grant leave of absence. No parent can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.
- Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for five days or more without the authority of the Head of School, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

### **Legal Proceedings**

The Inclusion Officer, on behalf of the Local Education Authority, has the authority to commence proceedings either in the Magistrates' Court or in the Family Proceedings Court when a student fails without justification to attend school on a regular basis.

Legal proceedings may also be taken when a student persistently arrives late to school. Lateness after the close of register constitutes an unauthorised absence. When considering legal proceedings the Inclusion Officer will consult with the Head of School who will be asked to complete a Certificate of Attendance for the student to be used in the prosecution process or in the application for an Education Supervision Order.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

The Government introduced the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Part of this Act gives new powers to the Local Authority and School to tackle poor school attendance. The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued**

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1 September 2013 state that Head of Schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head of School is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for five days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without authority of the Head of School, each parent/carer is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances a warning will not be given where it can be shown that the parent/carers had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken. Any absence for illness that runs before or after a leave of absence will not be authorised without medical evidence and could result in the absence becoming 5 days or more.

Students identified by the police and education welfare officers engaged on truancy patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than seven unauthorised sessions during the preceding six school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or The Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after closure of registration without good reason. The lateness will be recorded in accordance with this policy.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued. If a warning is issued then a pupil will be given fifteen school days to show improvement before the Penalty Notice is issued.

### **Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions**

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parent/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without a justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice.

Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

### **Changing Schools**

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Bishop David Brown School staff as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the student will be leaving this school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- The new home address if the school details are not known.

The student's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.