



The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School Attendance Policy

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Governor Committee Approval: Full Governors

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Aims

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School recognises that:

Students should attend school regularly to learn, to socialise with friends and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and prosperity of the community.

There is a clear link between student achievement and their level of attendance at school. We want all our students to achieve the very best they can and for this they need to be in school regularly and on time.

- Late arrival disrupts the education not only of the student who is late but also of others in the class.

- It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends the school where they are on roll.
- Some students and their parents/carers may need to be supported at times in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

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

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School aims to achieve attendance of at least 96% annually.

Legislation and guidance

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

The Governing Body

The governing body 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.

The 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

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School will:

- Respond to concerns raised by both students and parents/carers in a prompt, fair and proper manner.
- Contact parents/carers if there are concerns about attendance that have not been explained.
- Report overall attendance figures on interim and full reports.
- Work with student, parents/carers, the school attendance advisor, the local authority and other outside agencies to resolve any issues that may be affecting attendance.
- Alert parents/carers if their child is absent and no authorisation or reason has been provided
- Contact the Local authority after 10 days if a child is missing education (CME).
- If there are any safeguarding concerns relating to prolonged absence or if a child is known to social services a referral to Herefordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be made straight away.

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the assistant headteacher responsible for attendance
- Works with our attendance consultant to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the assistant headteacher with responsibility for attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

All students will:

- Arrive by 8.45 am, appropriately prepared for the day, and register at both morning and afternoon registration.
- Attend school regularly, and for the whole school day, until 3.20 pm.
- Inform their tutor or Head of House of any problem or reason that affects their attendance at school.
- Follow the school protocol if required to leave school for any reason eg medical appointment
- Pass any note or letter about a recent or proposed absence to their tutor.

All our parents/carers will:

-Inform school of any changes to contact details.

- Ensure their child attends school every day, unless there is an exceptional reason for absence.
- Ensure their child arrives on time, prepared and equipped for the day.
- Inform the school by 9.00 am on each day of unforeseen absence.
- Respond to email or text alerts, sent by school in the event of an unforeseen absence
- Contact the school about any issues or concerns that may affect the attendance of their child.
- Inform the school in advance of any medical appointment during the school day that will necessitate absence even for part of a day.
- Ensure that students who have a medical appointment during the school day are only absent for the duration of the appointment and travel.

Recording attendance

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

The register provides the daily record of attendance of all students. It contributes to a student's interim and full reports and references. It is a legal document that may be required in a court of law as evidence, for example in prosecutions for non-attendance.

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School uses the SIMS electronic registration system. The main codes used are those laid down by the DfE:

- / present AM
- \ present PM
- O unauthorised absence
- I authorised absence for illness
- M authorised absence for medical/dentist appointment
- C authorised absence for other circumstances
- L late arrival before register closed
- H family holiday authorised by Headteacher
- G family holiday not authorised by Headteacher
- U late (after register closed) – unauthorised absence
- V educational visit or trip

The register for the first session will be taken at the start of the first lesson. The register for the second session will be taken during afternoon form time. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

➤ Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Where a student arrives after 8.55am, then he/she will be marked as late (L).

Students late after 9.15 am will be coded as U, which constitutes legally as an unauthorised absence.

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

➤ Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason.

➤ Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

➤ Identify whether the absence is approved or not

➤ Identify the correct attendance code to use

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher or delegated member of the SLT will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School believes that students need to be in school to benefit from the education offered and only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Headteacher authorise holidays in term time. Parents/carers should use the existing 13 weeks of school holidays for holiday/trips. By definition, exceptional trips do not occur regularly or often and are not holidays that could be taken at another time (albeit incurring a higher cost)

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. If parents/carers feel that they need to request an absence, then they should write to the Headteacher at least 6 weeks before the proposed holiday. Parents/carers will be informed by letter if an application has been successful or not.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Legal sanctions

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.

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.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT IMPROVED ATTENDANCE

Incentives

Students will be rewarded for good attendance through vouchers, letters home, postcards, emails or certificates. These will be recorded on SIMS according to the Rewards and Sanction policy. If excellent attendance is maintained for one school year, then a 100% Bronze attendance badge will be awarded. If they can maintain this for two years, then a silver badge is awarded and gold badge is given for three years of 100% attendance.

Support in school

The school believes firmly in working in partnership with parent/carers to resolve issues. Parents/carers and students must contact the school if they are experiencing problems with attendance. This should be to the Mentor, Head of House or Form Tutor. Additional support can be provided through the School Attendance consultant or School Counsellors.

Links to other policies

In all cases where attendance is a problem, consideration will be given to whether any aspect of one of our other policies such as the safeguarding policy, anti-bullying policy, behaviour policy or special educational needs policy should be considered to help support improved attendance. For example, whether the student has an unrecognised special educational need that affects attendance.

Reintegration

We realise that returning to school following a period of absence can be very difficult for some young people, whatever the reason for their absence. In these situations, school staff will plan carefully with parents/carers and the student, together with any relevant agencies about how best to support the student's return to school.

Attendance monitoring

PROCESS OF DEALING WITH ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

- Tutors discuss attendance during registrations and through mentoring and seek reasons for absence and lateness.
- They refer concerns about attendance to the Head of House or learning mentor, who will talk to the student.
- If matters do not improve, the Head of House or learning mentor will contact the parents/carers, so that they can take steps to deal with the absence/lateness and ensure that they carry out their legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance.
- Where there is cause for concern, a letter explaining the importance of attendance and warning parents/carers about Penalties will be sent. This letter aims to encourage parents/carers to contact school to discuss the problem.
- The Head of House or learning mentor will liaise with the School Attendance Consultant, where there is a cause for concern. It is important that all actions taken to address poor attendance are logged and shared.
- Where attendance does not improve the matter will be referred to the school attendance Consultant who will initially write to parents with the concerns. If there is no improvement, the School Attendance Consultant will make arrangements to meet, so as to discuss ways to improve attendance.
- Where there are high levels of absence for illness. School will request permission to liaise with the student's GP about the support we can offer.
- Where there are high levels of unauthorised absence a referral may be made to the local authority to begin a prosecution under The Education Act 1996 Section 444 1 (a). This would normally instigate a Penalty Notice Warning (PNW) followed by a Penalty Notice if the unauthorised absence persists. A penalty notice is a fine of £60, rising to £120 after 21 days issued to each parent or carer. Further to this the local authority may pursue matters in court.

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Attendance data is collected every week and is shared at SLT meetings and with Heads of House to action. This is to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

APPENDIX 1 – PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF A PLANNED OR UNFORSEEN ABSENCE

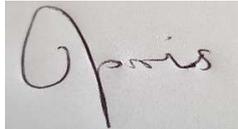
Absences are checked shortly after the registers close in the morning. We expect that parents/carers will have contacted the school in the event of an unforeseen absence and this information will be logged on our system. In the event of an unforeseen absence we request that parents/carers inform us as soon as possible. This can be done via email (preferred) using the 'Contact us' link on the school website or by phone on 01432 347563. Our admin team will then check through the phone calls, emails, the morning registers and the registers for lesson 1. If we can't account for a student whereabouts, we will contact parents/carers (listed as priority contacts) via email or text as soon as possible. If necessary we will also make a phone call.

Once this alert has been sent, we may send out another email to the parents/carers of all other absentees. Although parents/carers may have phoned, we do need a written record, either by email, letter or text. We request that they respond to this email with a few brief details and this information will be stored under the child's name. There is no need to send in a note if the email has been responded to. Parents/carers can still send a written note if they would prefer and this will be scanned and attached to the child's data record. These notes should be taken directly to student services.

Parents and carers must also telephone the school or write a note to let us know about a medical appointment or another circumstance that will result in an absence. Students will not be allowed to leave the school site unless we have authorisation from parents and carers. Reception staff will not allow a student to leave the premises unless the signed note has been authorised by student services or a parent/carer is there to collect them.

Registers are also taken at the start of every lesson using SIMS. Lesson registration enables patterns of internal truancy to be identified, which may indicate problems with a particular subject or a wider issue. Any student present in the previous lesson, but absent in the next lesson without good cause will try to be located. In the event that the student can't be found, then parents/carers will be contacted. If a student is absent without their parents'/carers' knowledge then this is a safeguarding matter, as they may be putting themselves at risk in a number of ways. Communication between home and school is vital in helping to prevent this occurring and reducing risk.

Approved by Full Governing Body

A square image containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'A. Jones'.

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Chairman

...25/03/2021.....

Date