



# The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School Attendance Policy

**SLT Lead: Jonathan Nicholas**

**Reviewed: February 2026**

**Governor Committee Approval: Behaviour & Safety**

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## The school's vision

Jesus said: "I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness." This serves as the cornerstone of our school community. By fostering a culture of positive learning experiences rooted in core Christian values, we aim to equip our students for a life of resilience, fulfilment, and meaningful contribution to society.

This policy supports our school vision and ethos.

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## 1.Aims

In order to live a life in all its fullness, 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 student 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 95% annually.

## 2.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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [Working together to improve school attendance 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3.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 students
- 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 students, 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 (CMIE).
- 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 student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the pastoral team and the assistant headteacher responsible for attendance
- Works with our attendance consultant to tackle persistent absence
- Calls parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the assistant headteacher with responsibility for attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Contacts parents/carers at the start of the day if we have not been informed about absence

- Ensures that all registers have been completed and coding is accurate
- Generates letters and emails to be sent home regarding attendance matters.
- Alerts mentors about who to contact during unplanned absence

### **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, mentor 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 e.g. medical appointment
- Pass any note or letter about a recent or proposed absence to student services.

### **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.

## **4. Recording attendance**

We will keep an attendance register and place all students 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
- B Attending any other approved educational activity

O	Unauthorised absence
I	Authorised absence for illness
M	Authorised absence for medical/dentist appointment
C	Authorised absence for other circumstances
D	Dual registered with another school
C1	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad.
C2	Students on part-time timetables.
E	Suspended or excluded
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.
L	Late arrival before register closed
G	Holiday not authorised by Headteacher
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
N	Reason for absence not yet established
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes. No fixed abode.
U	Late (after register closed) – unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip
W	attending work experience
Y1	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	For when part of a school is closed
Y4	Unexpected whole school closure (different from code # for planned closures)
Y5	For students in the criminal justice system
Y6	Absence due to public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause
Z	Prospective student not an admissions register
#	Planned whole school closure

The register for morning roll call will be taken during the morning form time. The register for the afternoon roll call will be taken during lesson 4. A register will also be taken at the start of every lesson. 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 student'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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

## **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student'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 student 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 student who arrives late:

Where a student arrives after 8.50am, then he/she will be marked as late (L). Students late after 9.20am will be coded as U, which constitutes legally as an unauthorised absence.

Students who are more than 4 minutes late to a lesson will also be marked as late. Those who are persistently late to lessons will receive sanctions according to the Behaviour policy.

## **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.

## **5.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 students 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 student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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.

### **Legal sanctions**

The local authority can either fine or take legal action against parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The school will contact the family with a warning letter, when there are 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence. If the problem persists then a Notice to Improve may be issued.

A **Notice to Improve** is a formal written warning from the school that is issued to parents when a child has 10 or more unauthorised absences (5 school days) within a 10-week school period. It gives families a final opportunity to address attendance concerns before further enforcement action is taken.

This notice is issued when previous support has already been offered or is deemed inappropriate and when absences are unauthorised—such as when no valid reason is provided. It is not used for term-time holidays taken without permission; in those cases, the council may issue a fine immediately.

The notice outlines the expected improvements in the child's attendance. Parents are expected to work closely with the school to ensure attendance improves, which may include attending meetings or accessing support services. It acts as both a warning and a last chance to avoid penalties.

If attendance does not significantly improve after the notice is issued, then the matter will be referred to the council who may proceed with a penalty notice (fine) or, in more serious cases, court prosecution. The aim is to ensure all children have consistent access to education and that persistent absence is addressed in a supportive but firm manner

A fine will be considered if a student misses a further 10 sessions (half days) through unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence. For example, four missed sessions without good reason in term time, plus six instances of arriving late after registers close.

The period of 10 weeks can also span different terms or school years. Councils retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This could include where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

A penalty notice is a fine of £80, rising to £160 after 21 days issued to each parent or carer. Further to this the local authority may pursue matters in court. These figures are set by the Department for Education.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If parents are prosecuted and attend court because their child hasn't been attending school, they could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support.

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 student 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.

## **6.Strategies to Support Improved Attendance**

### **Incentives**

Students will be rewarded for good attendance through certificates, badges, vouchers, letters home, emails or reward trips. These will be recorded on SIMS according to the Rewards and Sanction policy.

### **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 mental health and well-being policy, 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.

## **7.Attendance Monitoring**

### **Process of dealing with Attendance Concerns**

The attendance officer will provide Heads of House/tutors with a tutor list of cumulative attendance every week.

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 also talk to the student.

### A staged approach

1. Our mentors will aim to contact all families on each day of unplanned absence.

2. We will alert parents when attendance is less than 90% after the first 4 weeks. The communication will provide detail about how the students can move out of this category.
3. We will use our attendance package 'Attend' to send regular information home, where attendance is a concern.
4. If attendance does not improve then a letter will be sent home from our attendance consultant (EWO) to raise our concerns and offer support.
5. If the absences continue to accrue, then our attendance consultant (EWO) will request a meeting with parents, and an EHA will be considered.

### **Unauthorised absence**

If a parent/carer does not provide a reason for an absence, then this will be coded as unauthorised after two weeks. The attendance officer will send an email home if there are more than 6 sessions of unauthorised absence for which we have no information.

This will explain the importance of attendance and warn parents/carers that Penalties may be sent. This aims to encourage parents/carers to contact school to discuss the problem.

Legal action described above may be taken if there is unauthorised absence

### **Persistent absence**

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee. Parents will be contacted by email to inform them that their child is persistently absent. This will occur after the first half term, so that there is sufficient data to work from. They will be encouraged to contact school to discuss the issue with their Head of House.

It is important that all actions taken to address poor attendance are logged and shared.

Where there are high levels of absence for illness (20 or more sessions). School may request permission to liaise with the student's GP about the support we can offer. The letter will also state that any absences due to illness must be supported with medical evidence.

## **10. Monitoring arrangements**

Absence data will be collected by the DfE each week so that we can compare our data to national and local authority level. This data will be discussed every week at the attendance panel meeting and will be shared with the SLT every week.

Governors will receive an update at the Behaviour and Safety meetings and the Full governing board meetings.

## 11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Behaviour and Safety Committee or the Full Governing Committee.

### Approved by Governors Behaviour & Safety Committee



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**Cate Collins**  
**Chairperson**

**12<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

.....  
**Date**

## **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.