



Attendance Policy

CATEGORY:	Policy
CLASSIFICATION:	Strategic
PURPOSE	Policy covering scope and responsibilities for attendance monitoring and expectations of students
Controlled Document Number:	62
Version Number:	2
Controlled Document Lead:	B Worth
Adopted by governors on:	20 th March 2019
Amendment by governors on:	
Review Date:	20 th March 2020
Distribution:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Reading for: 	All Governors/Manager/Staff/Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for: 	All Employees and other stakeholders

Introduction

Our mission is to teach our students to develop the academic behaviours, learning strategies and academic perseverance that are necessary to be successful in school and beyond.

Academic behaviours are those behaviours that are associated with being a “good student.” A key behaviour associated with being a good student is attending school regularly.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this by working together.

Why regular attendance is so important?

Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child’s regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility - parents, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on promoting regular attendance we will:

- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.
- Celebrate good attendance through achievement assemblies
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions and rewards

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies; or other unavoidable causes.

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 Participation Team 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.
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

Whilst any child 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 and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, 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.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times.
- Helping with homework.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Providing a healthy breakfast.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly.
- Retaining open & honest communication with the school.
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive).

Persistent Absentees

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Students who are persistently absent are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Students who are persistently absent and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include:

- Allocation of additional support through a Mentor or a Learning Support Assistant.
- Individual incentive programmes.
- Participation in group activities around raising attendance.

All persistent absence cases are also automatically made known to the Education Access Team.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, **and**
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us, **or**
- Call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak to you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Participation Team if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please ensure we have an up to date contact number and inform us of any changes.

There will be regular checks on telephone numbers each year.

The Education Access Team

Parents 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 child to the Education Access Team from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Education Access Team can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices.

If issued with a penalty notice parents have a fixed amount of days to make payment, this is made direct to the local authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

Registers are marked at 8:45am. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in their first lesson of the day by that time.

Your child will receive a 20 minute lunchtime detention that day if they are late.

At 8:55 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child 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 for that session. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head of House and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach your son/daughter's Tutor and/or Attendance Officer at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect your son/daughter's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The Education Access Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned and for each child's absences. If unauthorised leave is repeated the Education Access Team may summons each parent to Court.

School targets

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Good attendance is the key to successful schooling and students with a higher attendance perform better at school.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Bridgnorth Endowed School Pastoral team are responsible for attendance.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and in order to promote excellent attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Regular attendance ensures your child reaches their true potential.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Bridgnorth Endowed School reviews this policy annually and assesses its implementation and effectiveness. This policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school. The school also analyses questionnaires and uses this data to inform future practice and policy. This policy will be reviewed annually.