

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Philosophy

We believe that to gain the greatest benefits from education it is vital students attend and enjoy a vibrant learning environment to support their achievement. We recognise that strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality, when linked with related strategies on behaviour and teaching/learning, can have a marked effect on student attainment. We acknowledge that maintaining good levels of attendance and punctuality is a shared responsibility between student, parent/carer, school and other agencies within the Local Authority.

### Broad Goals

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for students, parents, staff and governors.
- To ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal responsibilities with regard to school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure the link between Attendance and Safeguarding is made transparent and consistently addressed by the Safeguarding team.
- To encourage parents/carers to work cooperatively with the school on matters of school attendance and punctuality by:
  - Making sure that students attend school regularly, arrive on time and keep the school's rules on attending lessons.
  - Contacting the school on the first day of a student's illness and everyday thereafter.
  - Providing explanations for a student's absence.
  - By seeking permission, following LA guidelines, if they wish their son/daughter to miss school, e.g. because of extenuating circumstances - permission should be sought well in advance and reasons given; travel documentation will be required as necessary.
  - Not taking family holidays or any other prolonged absence during term time and to avoid taking the student out of school when he/she/they should be taking exams or tests.
  - Parents realise that they could be fined for any absence that is 5 days or more for personal reasons except where there are exceptional circumstances agreed with the school.
  - Taking an interest in the school work set.
- The **school** will endeavour to:
  - Ensure all students feel supported and valued and promote positive staff attitudes to those students returning from absences and enabling missed work to be completed where possible.
  - Ensure tutors and teaching staff monitor students' attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis, raising any concerns with the student's Assistant Head of Year. Tutors to identify rewards and celebrate those with full attendance.
  - Complete registers accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session and regularly monitor attendance.
  - Parents will be sent a text message if students have been marked absent and we have not been notified of the said absence.
  - Implement a range of reward systems to celebrate good and improved attendance of all students and sanctions where students persistently miss registration and/or do not provide an adequate explanation.
  - Attendance will be part of all reward assemblies on individual, tutor and year level.

## Student Outcomes

We will know when these broad goals are being effective when there are consistent reductions in our school statistics for unauthorised absences and increases in overall attendance.

### Dealing with attendance

Biddenham uses the [Attendance diamond](#) and students are expected to know their attendance colour and percentage.

There are five attendance groups:

Green	96% - 100%	Expected Attendance
Yellow	95.9% - 90%	Risk of Underachievement
Amber	89.9% - 85%	Serious Risk of Underachievement
Pink	84.9% - 80%	Severe Risk of Underachievement
Red	79.9% - 0%	Extreme Risk of Underachievement

- **PHASE 1:** Students whose attendance slips below 96% will be placed on tutor attendance report. Parents are notified of the concern by the tutor.
- **PHASE 2:** Students whose attendance falls below 92% or students identified as having falling attendance for no acceptable reason, and therefore present a risk of becoming a persistent absentee, are placed on amber report to the Assistant Head of Year and will be seen daily by them. The first attendance letter is sent to parents/carers by the Attendance Officer. Subsequent attendance is monitored for a period of 3 weeks. If no improvement is noted, move to Phase 3.
- **PHASE 3:** An attendance letter will be sent requesting that future absences will require medical evidence in order to be authorised. If no improvement is seen, move to Phase 4.
- **PHASE 4:** The Attendance Officer requests LA EWO to issue a Penalty Notice Warning letter. Parents/carers are notified of a further 3 week monitoring period. Any absence in this period could result in a penalty fine being issued to both parents/carers of £60. However, before a fine is pursued, parents may, at the schools discretion, be invited to a meeting with the Whole School Attendance Lead to discuss a way forward. This may result in pursuing the fine or an Early Help Assessment (EHA) may be considered. If no improvement is seen, move to Phase 5.
- **PHASE 5:** If there are no unauthorised absences during the monitoring period the Attendance Officer will continue to monitor the attendance. If parents/carers are issued a fine and attendance does not improve, the case is referred to the LA EWO who will notify parents/carers of the next stages. Biddenham School reserves the right to treat each case individually and take any necessary action within the policy to improve a students' attendance at any stage.

### Processes for Children Missing Education (CME)

- Children Missing in Education are children who have not attended school for at least 10 days in a row and with no communication from home regarding their absence.
- Daily monitoring of registers and enquiries made to HOY for students with continuous absence if required.
- Create report, looking at chosen (code O) for 10 days of continuous unauthorised absences
- Check each student from report and action; a phone call, a letter or home visit.

- If student not found, complete CME form for Bedford Borough EWS.

### **Developing a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities**

- **Teachers:** All registers must be completed at the start of the lesson. Teachers should only mark students as present if they can physically see them in the classroom at the time of registration. Students who arrive late on to the school site and all students who arrive late to first registration (Tutor time or P1 on Tuesdays) will receive an intouch text home to inform parents that their child was **late to school (L)**.
- Taking the register is a statutory duty. Teaching staff that notice a pattern of absence or are concerned by the absence of a student should raise their concerns immediately with the Form Tutor.
- Students who are in school but fail to attend lessons will be marked as truant by the attendance officer. (code 4). Home will be contacted via an Intouch text message.
- **Tutors:** are to use the attendance spreadsheet data to promote good attendance on an individual student and whole tutor group basis; to raise initial concerns about attendance, including authorisation of absence or punctuality with parents and the Assistant Head of Year; to maintain an overview of each individual students' attendance percentage within their tutor group; to reward good attendance.
- **Attendance Officer:** to ensure that registers are completed by teaching staff; to operate the SMS messages to the parents/carers of students absent without authorisation; to update the SIMS attendance system in light of parent response and to ensure the attendance database is maintained; to provide statistics for Heads of Years, Assistant Head of Years, tutors and SLT as required regarding individual students, tutor groups, and whole school attendance; to refer any cases that may require further action under the LA statutory role to the EWO. To monitor and report on CME under the instruction of the Heads of Year
- **Heads of Year / Assistant Head of Year:** To establish and maintain oversight of the tutors' role with respect of attendance and punctuality; to maintain an overview of attendance and punctuality of students within each year analysing data; to liaise with parents regarding attendance and punctuality where issues are not resolved by tutor intervention; to liaise with the Attendance Officer, to monitor attendance plans.

Date of Next Review: **February 2025**