

Bedford High School

A specialist Business and Enterprise College

To Care To Learn To Achieve



Attendance Policy

School Address	Manchester Road Leigh WN7 2LU
School Contact Number	01942 909009

Document control

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Current author	Paul McCaffery
Governing Committee	Standards
Electronic copies of this plan are available from	FROG VLN
Hard copies of this plan are available from	HR, Facilities & Communication Manager
Public sector equality duty guidance considered	Yes

Changes History

Date	Description	Changes
June 2019	Reporting absence Return to school meeting with PGO	Page 3 Page 4

At Bedford we demand the highest level of attendance from all our students so that they may develop their full potential during their time at school. It is our aim to maintain a culture of excellence, attendance and punctuality. Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. Everyone associated with the school – students, parents, all teaching and support staff and external agencies must do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work.

Attendance Guidance for Parents/Carers

Key fact to remember – 90% attendance means that your child has missed 19 days (95 hours) of learning in 1 year. These students will typically drop at least ONE GCSE GRADE.

Raise your child's attendance - Raise their chances!

At Bedford excellent attendance and punctuality is our aim for every student. Full attendance maximises learning opportunities and parents/carers have a vital role in promoting good attitudes in attendance. Evidence shows that students who attend school regularly make better progress both academically and socially. We ask for support from parents/carers to:

- Ensure that their children are present at every opportunity
- Arrive on time
- Avoid allowing children to stay at home unnecessarily
- Avoid taking them out of school without authorisation.

We monitor attendance closely and will follow up unexplained absence with parents/carers, by telephone, home visit or by letter. Where a student's attendance record reaches a concerning level, we will contact you to discuss ways in which the school can support you and your child.

The school attendance target of 98% is the minimum that we expect for all students. Every lesson counts and it is this commitment to learning that will have a positive impact on attainment and progress. If your child's attendance falls below 95%, you will be informed of this and may be requested to attend a meeting in school to discuss reasons for your child being absent.

As of September 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) announced that any student whose attendance falls below 90% will be classed as a Persistently Absent student. Therefore, if a student misses 19 or more days over an academic year they will be classed

as Persistently Absent. If your child's attendance falls below this, you will be informed of this and will be requested to attend a meeting in school to discuss reasons for your child being persistently absent.

Reporting Absence

What to do if your child is ill:

If your child is too ill to attend school, parents/carers should contact the School's Attendance Line as soon as possible.

Telephone 01942 909009 and select Option 1 for Student Absence. The telephone system allows callers to leave a message 24 hours a day.

Please give your child's name, Year Group, and the reason for the absence.

You must contact school each day that your child is absent unless you have given us notification informing the length of the absence through medical evidence. On your child's return following an absence, we request that parents/carers write a brief note explaining the absence. The student should hand the note in to the Attendance Office.

Whilst students are not expected to attend school if they are too ill, absence levels need to be managed. The Department for Education's School attendance guidance states that **schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support student illness. School will request this if your child has had 2 periods of illness within a 12 week period or their overall attendance is below 90%. If medical evidence is not provided in these circumstances, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised and school will follow the unauthorised absence procedure.**

Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards (including dosage labels of medicines/tablets etc) or a doctor's note.

What to do if your child has an appointment:

We ask that, where possible, you make routine medical and other appointments out of school time. If this is not possible, we require **advance notification**. Please provide an appointment letter/card and a note from home indicating when they need to leave site. In most cases, your child should attend school before the appointment and return to the School afterwards wherever possible.

Automated texts to parents/carers:

We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously. If the Attendance Team has received no reason for absence and a student is absent from Period 1 (8.50 – 9.50) automated texts are made daily to the contact numbers of parents/carers. Texts are made on a daily basis, even where your child has been absent due to illness on previous days. We cannot

assume that your child is still ill unless you have notified us. We would not wish to put your child at risk by failing to contact you. Please ensure your child realises the importance of attending registration on time and getting their present mark. Parents/carers can also help by ensuring that we hold up to date contact details.

If parents do not contact school regarding absence, a home visit may be conducted by our Attendance Manager or pastoral team. This is due to possible safeguarding concerns in relation to the 'Children missing education' statutory guidance. As a school we have a responsibility to safeguard all of our students.

Punctuality

All students are expected to arrive to school on time and be ready and punctual to lessons. This is a minimum expectation. Students should arrive for 8.25am. Students are expected to be in registration by 8.30am ready to start learning. After 8.30am, students will be marked as late and will receive a breaktime detention. We would be grateful for your support in ensuring that your child arrives on time.

Parents of students who are persistently late to school will be invited into school to discuss ways of improving your child's punctuality.

Holidays in term time

We want to give our young people the very best educational experience we can and an extended absence from school can affect this by causing disruption to learning and progress. **For this reason we do not authorise holidays during term time.** If a child is taken out of school in term time for a holiday, then the period of absence will be unauthorised and the child in question may be deemed to have 'failed to attend school regularly' (see Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.)

Leave of absence for other reasons

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, a leave of absence may only be granted by the school (usually through the headteacher) in exceptional circumstances. Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping for uniform, birthdays, day trips, etc. If parents/carers wish their child(ren) to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, special family events, or to participate in sporting or musical competitions etc, application should be made in writing, in advance where possible, or by telephone to the Pastoral team or Attendance Officer. It may be necessary for parents to apply for a performance license in such circumstances.

Return to school meetings

All students will complete a return to school meeting with their Pastoral Guidance officer when they return to school. This is a supportive measure to ensure that the child feels supported when returning to school, and any concerns that the child may have can be addressed to enable a smooth reintegration into school.

Prolonged periods of absence

If a child has a prolonged period of absence, then a well-being meeting will be conducted by pastoral staff with both the parents and the child when the child returns to school. This is a supportive measure to ensure that the child feels supported when returning to school, and any concerns that the child may have can be addressed to enable a smooth reintegration into school.

Possible consequences of any unauthorised term time absences

(see also *‘Wigan Council Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct’*)

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. It is essential that parents maximise the educational opportunities available for their children and provide the best possible start in life.

An Education Penalty Notice warning is communicated to all parents at the beginning of the academic year and subsequently each term. An Education Penalty Notice may be issued following an Education Penalty Notice warning being sent.

School would request that the Local Authority issue an Education Penalty Notice if a child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12 week period;

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

The Local Authority will consider issuing a Penalty Notice to each responsible parent.

Excluded pupils

Section 105 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers designated Local Authority Officers, Headteachers (and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases where an excluded pupil is in a public place during school hours at any time during the first five days of any period of exclusion from school without justifiable cause.

If the pupil was subsequently to be found out in a public place again either during the same period of exclusion or during a further exclusion within the same academic year then a penalty notice may be issued.

Non-payment of a penalty notice issued where a parent allows an excluded pupil during the first five days of any period of exclusion to be present in a public place without justifiable cause may result in a prosecution under Section 103 (3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Payment of Penalty Notices

The payment of an Education Penalty Notice will be £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 to be paid within 28 days.

Non-payment of Education Penalty Notices

If payment is not received within 28 days, the Local Authority will consider prosecution for the unauthorised absence to which the Education Penalty Notice relates.

Non-payment of an Education Penalty Notice may result in legal action being taken by the Local Authority. These actions will be considered where a significant improvement of school attendance is not apparent.

The prosecution is not for the non-payment of the notice but is for failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

The instigation of legal proceedings for unauthorised absence from school under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 may also be considered where it is deemed to be appropriate.

In these circumstances, the school is required to provide the Local Authority with a signed school attendance record of the student.

How to get help if your child is not attending regularly

Bedford High School work closely with Wigan Council's School Attendance Service and have an allocated Attendance Officer who visits school on a regular basis and monitors attendance of pupils who are persistent absence (less than 90% attendance). Our Attendance Officer, Attendance Manager and Pastoral Guidance Officer will give you advice and support if you need help to improve your child's school attendance, although you should be aware that this is ultimately the legal responsibility of the parent/carer.

It is very important that you speak with the school, our Attendance Manager or our Allocated Attendance Officer (contactable via school) at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of your child at school.

Alternatively parents can self refer to the Early Intervention and Prevention service (Start Well) Telephone number 01942 486262. It is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as the Council's School Attendance Service.