

ATTENDANCE FOR LEARNING POLICY FOR THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL



NAMED PERSON:

M WARDLE

ATTACHED COMMITTEE:

Performance

REVIEWED:

September 2021

REVIEW CYCLE:

2 Years

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

September 2023

1.0 This policy links to the following school policies:

- **Behaviour for Learning**
- **Anti-Bullying**
- **Learning & Teaching**
- **Safeguarding Policy**

Further guidance can be found on the Buckinghamshire Council website

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/education/education-support/attendance/>

Advice on the law in relation to attendance, national guidance and approved absence codes can also be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf

In addition, there is specific Covid related attendance information at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. The Buckingham School believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

The School's vision of 'Success for All', ensures that our staff will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties, in order to ensure that all students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The Buckingham School recognise that attendance can often be a symptom of a wider issue and as a result, our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2.0 Philosophy

We believe outstanding attendance and punctuality are vital in enabling students to make the most of their learning opportunities and thus prepare them for the demands of their adult life. Regular attendance and punctuality makes learning easier. If students are not in school attending their lessons, the chances of gaps appearing in their learning is increased. With good attendance, students will achieve better results, greater confidence, have increased self-esteem and develop useful skills for the workplace.

As a school we will do all we can to maximise attendance for all students. Any barriers that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible, through the School's pastoral system, Director of Welfare and Attendance and Attendance Manager.

It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. The Buckingham School actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our students.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance and punctuality. The School recognises positive home communication is essential to encourage improved attendance. To support this, the School will aim to operate a 3:1 ratio of positive communication to support all families who are struggling with their attendance.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with parents/carers and students, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times. At The Buckingham School, we believe early intervention is vital in ensuring poor attendance does not become a key contributor to poor learning. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020, we recognise that Children Missing Education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming a NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

3.0 Principles

Our vision as a school encourages students to demonstrate the key virtues; Ambition, Confidence, Resilience, Respect, Empathy, Integrity and Curiosity. Positive attendance is a vital ingredient in ensuring our students are able to fulfil their potential and actively be part of the vision during their journey through school

As a school we will ensure that attendance is promoted so students recognise its importance in being successful, that all groups of students are equally supported with attendance issues, and vulnerable students may need additional intervention during difficult times

3.1 Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent
- Or appropriately coded if they are not in school by the Attendance Manager

4. Expectations

4.1 We expect that all our **students** will:

- Attend school regularly and all lessons in the correct uniform
- Arrive on time at 8:30am to school and to all lessons
- Be properly prepared and equipped for the day's learning
- Be fully involved in all lessons
- Follow correct procedures for attendance and punctuality
- Carry out any work provided by the school during an extended authorised absence period, such a Covid enforced absence, i.e. self-isolation.

4.2 We expect that **parents/carers** will:

- Place a high priority on attendance and achievement
- Not take their child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours where possible
- Ensure family holidays are not taken in term time
- Inform a member of staff, usually the Student Welfare & Attendance Officer, Form Tutor or Head of Year, of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school
- Work with the school, and other agencies if necessary, to resolve issues and ensure good attendance and punctuality
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child/ren attends school
- Ensure their child is punctual to school
- Contact school, on the first morning of absence, before 9.00am whenever their child is unable to attend school and send in a written note on their return (this can be done by calling the absence line, email or parent mail)
- Maintain contact with the school if absence is likely to be longer than 3 days, for example, due to illness
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence.
- Ensure any work is completed at home during an enforced period of absence
- Provide where necessary medical evidence for long term absence, and ensure no absence is unauthorised and provide reasons for any absence

It is the school who authorises any absence and not parents/carers. The Headteacher has the right to refuse authorisation of absence in accordance with Local Authority (LA) guidelines

4.3 The **school** will:

- Record accurately attendance and punctuality every morning and afternoon, as well as each lesson
- Make early contact when a student is absent without explanation
- Contact those students considered vulnerable first if they are absent
- Take action on any attendance problem notified to the school
- Make referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate
- Provide early intervention on any students causing concerns with attendance
- Work together with parents/carers and students to resolve any attendance issues
- Work with students to provide an appropriate re-integration package to help return to school after long term absence
- Provide appropriate work for students who are absent from school for an extended period
- Include attendance registrations for each student when annual reports are sent home
- Acknowledge and reward students with good and improved attendance and punctuality
- Set school attendance targets and accurately complete the census when required.
- Report routinely to The School Governors.

5.0 Specific Roles and Responsibilities of school staff

5.1 The Director of Student Welfare & Attendance and Attendance Manager will:

- Ensure they contact parents/carers on first day of student's absence, if not already informed, and log the information
- Send out standard letters as requested – see procedures
- Input information from late arrivals into Go4Schools which feeds into SIMS
- On weekly basis, produce absence report for completion by tutor. Maintain a daily log on any registers that were inaccurate or incomplete and report to AHT for them to action.
- Reward those students who have demonstrated 100% or consistently high attendance over weeks, half terms and terms through House Points and/or vouchers.
- Produce data each half term as requested by Assistant Headteacher.
- Produce data and organise PCM meetings
- Produce registration certificates showing individual student's attendance to include in annual reports and as requested by Heads of Year
- Meet with Heads of Year to discuss individual attendance cases, identifying those causing concern and making interventions.
- Work together with referred students and their families, as well as the school, to resolve issues of poor attendance and punctuality
- Consider referring parents/carers to the Social Services/Family Resilience team for casework if other intervention strategies prove unsuccessful or if it deems it may bring about an improvement in the child's school attendance. This may result in Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or 'Fast Track' legal proceedings. These students will be given individual Attendance Action Plans that will be drawn up in liaison with the ATM & DWA, the students and the parents/carers

5.2 The Form Tutor will:

- Set an example by having good attendance and arriving on time for registration
- Explain the need for and promote habits of regular attendance and punctuality with the group and individuals
- Accurately mark the register daily (**this is a legal requirement**) only using codes A N or L
- Ensure absence notes are provided and are passed on to the Student Office. Determine whether the reason for absence is acceptable and record reason on absence sheet
- Follow up on any absence via the parents where necessary
- To monitor attendance and punctuality of students in the Form, particularly those whose attendance falls below 97% but is above 94%.
- Alert Heads of Year regarding any concerns about absence and punctuality if action they have taken proves ineffective
- Use the rewards and sanctions system
- Welcome long-term absentees back to the Form Tutor group

5.3 The Heads of Year will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within his/her year groups to ensure targets are met
- Ensure attendance is a regular feature in assemblies throughout the term.
- Ensure all Form Tutors are familiar with and apply the policy consistently
- Provide support for Form Tutors as required and hold them to account for monitoring and following up on attendance
- Monitor and supervise the work of their Form Tutors in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality
- To monitor closely the attendance of students whose attendance falls below 94%.
- Use weekly data analysis to identify individual and groups
- Follow up with students who truant lessons and respond accordingly
- Communicate with parents/carers of students who are experiencing attendance difficulties/require additional support and input
- Liaise with the Assistant Headteacher: SEN, Inclusion and Safeguarding, when appropriate

- Liaise, when appropriate, with outside agencies
- Devise, together with parents/carers and the student, individual attendance plans where necessary e.g. for persistent lateness and/or attendance
- 4c)
- Organise work for students on long-term absence; maintaining communication between school and home
- Organise a re-integration programme for those returning from long-term absence to help catch up on missed work
- Take action following analysis of weekly attendance data
- Utilise the school's rewards and sanctions system as appropriate

5.4 The SLT member of staff responsible for: SEN alongside the SEN Manager will:

- Monitor the attendance of all students with Educational Health Care Plans
- Support the Heads of year in working with students who have very poor attendance
- Liaise with Heads of Year regarding strategies for specific students
- Support the attendance of SEN K students by working with all stakeholders

5.5 The Assistant Headteacher and Lead Practitioner for Inclusion will:

- Help create a school ethos which promotes excellent levels of attendance
- Maintain high profile of attendance amongst students, staff, governors and parents/carers by providing where necessary:
 - INSET for staff promoting why attendance is important
 - discussion time for attendance matters in Heads of Year meetings
 - inspirational assemblies for use by Heads of Year in Year group assemblies
 - Half Term attendance data to Governors
- Work with Heads of Year in reviewing and developing specific rewards for promoting good attendance
- Work with Heads of Year in creating, and using consistently, a clear system of early intervention strategies for students whose attendance and/or punctuality is beginning to show signs of concern
- Conduct half-term analysis of trends and patterns of attendance and punctuality for each tutor group, year group, Key Stage and whole school. This data will include
 - types of absences e.g. Holidays, illness, medical etc.
 - authorised and unauthorised absences
 - analysis also shown by gender
 - analysis to show attendance and punctuality of students with SEN, Children Looked After and other groups as appropriate
- Keep the SLT informed on attendance matters, as necessary and provide report each half term to the Headteacher and Governors to include above trends analysis (benchmark and comparative data and action resulting
- Conduct analysis of students' exam performance in relation to attendance percentage for publication in September. Provide report to Senior Leadership and Governors to include action resulting
- Ensure the attendance policy is implemented and that systems are operating effectively
- Review and update Attendance Policy, as necessary
- Hold staff accountable for accuracy of register taking

5.6 The Governors will:

- Review and endorse the 'Attendance for Learning' policy
- Appoint Governor with responsibility for attendance
- Review attendance data termly and annually
- Set school attendance targets to reduce overall absence in accordance with "The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005" and submit them to the LA

5.7 The Subject Teacher will:

- Record attendance to lessons accurately and if necessary, amend accordingly, using only codes / N or L
- Check for internal truancy and set detention according to policy, where appropriate
- Follow up lateness to lessons (see B4L policy)

6.0 REWARDS

- Rewards are effective in motivating students and encouraging excellent attendance.
- The School should follow its Rewards Policy when acknowledging positive attendance.
- Celebration of Achievement assemblies at the end of each term to present individual student certificates for 100% attendance
- Allow opportunities for those with 100% attendance or significant improvements to attend a rewards trip.

7.0 EXPECTATIONS & SANCTIONS

- Any time after 8:30 and gates closed is classed as late
- Late to school no excuse - immediate lunch time issued by Staff on lates duty
- Tutors monitor lates to lesson - 3 lates in a week - report and lunch time detention
- Tutors track the lates to school list as to who did not attend
- 1 reattempt to sit the detention otherwise the escalation process occurs

ADDRESSING POOR ATTENDANCE:

- The DAW and ATM will monitor student's attendance and identify groups of students who are at risk of slipping under 90% e.g. Additionally, a warning letter (1a) will be sent when a student's attendance over a 3-week period is below 87%, informing parents that their child is at risk of becoming a PA (persistent absentee).
- Form Tutors will place students on an attendance/punctuality report for a further 3 weeks.
- Students, who truant lessons will be in violation of the school behaviour ladder (B5 see behaviour policy) and will instantly, be placed in an intervention day.
- If the student leaves the site without authorisation parents/carers will be informed by telephone as soon as the student is identified as missing. The student's behaviour will be recorded as a
- 'Serious incident' and confirmed to the parents/carers by the Heads of Year.

8.0 FIXED PENALTY NOTICES:

- If a child's attendance is a cause for concern following a period of 3 weeks at 87% or under whilst on a parental contract or thereafter, the school will issue a formal written warning to parents. Inviting parents to a PCM. This will allow a period of 6 weeks or half a term to improve attendance. If there are any unauthorised absences in that time a fixed penalty notice can be issued. Additionally, if attendance is not improved in that period of time, a fixed penalty notice can also be issued.

- Penalty notices will be issued under the following circumstances: -

Irregular school attendance;

- Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps);
- Parentally-condoned absences;

Unauthorised holidays in term-time;

- Being in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion

- Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued when intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine per parent/carer, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/. carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Additional information on the procedure of fixed penalty notices is in appendix 9 and also at the Buckinghamshire Council website:

https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/schools/childrens_services/social_inclusion/ews.asp

9.0 PROCEDURES TO PROMOTE GOOD ATTENDANCE

The register is taken at the start of the morning session at 8.35am (5 minutes.) and at the start of the afternoon session Period 5 at 2.10pm (5 minutes) every day. It is a legal requirement to register students both am. and pm: teachers must ensure it is taken accurately. There is also a class register taken at the start of every lesson.

Students will be marked either present or absent, depending on if they are in the room or not.

If a student arrives late, but the register is still open (DFE suggests a period of 30mins before the register is closed) they will get a late mark – L. If a student arrives after 9:30, they will be marked as – ‘U’ - and will require a reason from parents/carers. Students who arrive late can only gain access through the main reception, where they will sign in, their attendance mark will then be registered by ATM and notice entered on G4S.

Parents/carers of students who are regularly late will be informed and asked to take action to rectify the situation.

Students who need to leave school during the day, for example, to attend an authorised medical appointment, must sign out at main reception and, on their return, sign back in. Students must not leave the school without permission, or without notification from parent/carer.

If a student is unwell during the school day, they will need to go to First Aid where they will be assessed by a member of staff first aid trained and a decision will be made if they will need to be sent home, and the Student Hub will contact their parent/guardian to inform them and collect them if appropriate. Parents/carers should contact the School, via the Attendance/Absent line, Parent Mail or email on the first morning of absence, before 9.00am.

Parents/carers should maintain contact with the school if the absence is likely to be longer than 3 days. In addition, when the student returns they should bring with them a written note confirming the absence.

If the School has not been contacted on the first morning, the Attendance Manager will text parents, in the first instance, to inform them of their child’s absence and phone, in the second instance, to request the reason for absence.

If no contact has been an email, will be sent requesting reason for absence at the end of the day. Absences can only be authorised by the school and not the parents/carers. Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not “unavoidable”.

Students whose attendance falls below 90% will be monitored closely and if this pattern continues over a 3-week period, a 1a letter will be sent. Letters will be sent home to all those students, unless there is a validated medical problem, which is being/has, been treated.

Targeted students will be supported by the early intervention strategies. Students who experience difficulties in attendance will be supported in helping them return to full time education.

Students whose attendance falls below 87% over a 3-week period will be monitored by the Attendance Manager, prior to a formal referral if attendance fails to improve.

Students whose attendance and punctuality are good will be rewarded through HOY assemblies and through their parent's evenings.

Government guidelines state a student who has attendance under 90% becomes a persistent absentee.

Any student who has not attended school for 10 days (2 school weeks) without adequate or any explanation, standard safeguarding procedures will apply and A Child Missing in Education form will be completed.

10. Elective Home Education (EHE)

If a parent indicates to the School that they are considering EHE, the school must inform the Local Authority (LA) that a student may potentially be educated by parents.

A meeting then must be coordinated between all parties ahead of the child being withdrawn from school and the parent confirming in writing that they are being electively home educated instead.

During the meetings, LAs, schools and other relevant professionals such as social workers where appropriate, should work to help parents and carers understand exactly what EHE means, ensure it is a positive choice taken without pressure from the school.

The School will not advise parents to electively home educate their children. The best place for students to be educated remains in a school setting. The School will always inform social care if it feels that there are possible safeguarding concerns if a parent chooses to withdraw their child from the school roll, in order to educate at home.

The school along with the LA and other professionals has a responsibility to help parents fully understand the implications of withdrawing their child for EHE and their ongoing obligations, making clear that:

- Parents assume full financial responsibility,
- Their child may not be able to return to the same school if they change their mind,
- Support from schools will not continue, including any special educational needs support, and in cases where LAs are not satisfied a child is receiving a suitable education, the parent may be issued with a School Attendance Order and / or the court may make an Education Supervision Order.

THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL – A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE



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Reviewed: September 2021
Review Cycle: 2 Years
Next Review Date: September 2023

Mr Matthew Watkins
Chairman
Governing Body

Signed:  **Date:** September 2021