



# Bishop Justus School Policies

---

Policy Title:	Attendance & Punctuality Policy
LT Responsibility:	Headteacher
Date:	July 2020
Review:	July 2022

## Rationale

As a Church of England school we want each child to flourish academically and to realise their potential, so that they can have 'life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10) High levels of attendance and excellent punctuality are needed so that students can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. We are committed to providing a welcoming and caring school environment so that each member of the school feels valued and secure. Strong partnerships with parents/carers are essential in ensuring our aims are achieved. The school and the Aquinas Advisory Council recognise the statutory obligations governing the registration of pupils in accordance with 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

## Partnership between School and Parents/Carers OBJECTIVES

### For pupils/students

- To attend school every day and on time
- To ensure they maximise their learning potential by taking responsibility for achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality
- To discuss with their teacher/tutor/mentor/Year Coordinator any problems that may prevent full time attendance or from arriving to school on time
- To support their fellow students and thereby their class/tutor group/year/house in winning awards that relate to attendance and punctuality.
- To follow the School procedures for dealing with attendance and punctuality e.g., bringing in signed letters from parents after a period of absence or late arrival for the School day.
- To sign and adhere to the Home School Agreement with regard to attendance & punctuality

## **FOR Parent and Carers**

- To be fully supportive of the School with regard to attendance and punctuality
- To ensure their child attends every day, on time and is prepared for the day
- To support the School and their child (ren) by not requesting authorised absence for holidays during term time and minimising where possible dental appointments and medical appointments during the school day and term time.
- To follow the School procedures for dealing with attendance through making contact with the School on the first day of absence and every day thereafter ensuring that they send a signed letter to the School when their child returns.
- To contact the School immediately if they have concerns or if there are issues preventing full time attendance
- To sign and adhere to the Home School Agreement with regard to attendance & punctuality

## **Roles & Responsibilities for individual school staff (examples below only)**

### **FOR Teachers/Tutors/Mentors**

- To be a good role model and arrive to lessons on time
- To take the register at the beginning of every lesson in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- To take responsibility for dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality in relation to their tutor groups e.g., telephone calls, absence letters, liaising with the Year Coordinator, Attendance Officer
- To encourage their students and tutees to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality through monitoring and reinforcing the need for high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality and issuing attendance data weekly to their tutees.
- To update students weekly on their attendance statistics and their punctuality from the previous week.
- To assist in reintegrating any of their /tutees/students after a period of prolonged absence.

### **For Year Coordinators and Directors of Learning**

- To raise the profile of good attendance and monitor the attendance of students allocated to their year
- To be responsible for regular liaison with the Attendance Officer and EWO regarding poor attendance of students and issues related to poor punctuality, including ensuring appropriate letters are sent out by the Attendance Officer on their behalf.
- To liaise with parents as appropriate in response to attendance, punctuality and truancy issues; attending parental meetings as appropriate
- To ensure that Teachers/Tutors/Mentors in their subject areas fulfil their duties regarding attendance and punctuality and to take appropriate action when this does not occur
- To ensure that the School Reward System in relation to attendance and punctuality is used effectively.

### **For Attendance Officer**

- Carry out first day calling/text messaging and establish reasons for absence including telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, send attendance letters A, B, C & D weekly/when appropriate as well as 100% attendance letters.

- To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the school computerized registration systems for attendance and punctuality, for example, processing registers
- Preparing and distributing attendance data and reports to staff and SLT on a regular basis
- To liaise with Attendance Lead/ Head teacher/Administration staff/Teachers and assist in following up poor attendance and punctuality, for example, liaising with Education Welfare Officer (EWO), ensuring that student attendance targets are agreed and monitored.
- Once a month, an official register will be printed. The Attendance Officer must ensure all codes are applied and remove the N code prior to printing/storing the registers. The official register will highlight the number of authorised and unauthorised absences as well as the number of late marks for each child.

#### **FOR THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- Through Head teacher/Deputy and Assistant Head teacher to co-ordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the School
- To raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality, for example, through the assemblies and the reward systems that are put in place
- To analyse and act swiftly in response to report data on attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that the learning environment on offer to students, creates the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality
- To ensure that School expectations in regards to this policy on attendance and punctuality is communicated clearly to all stakeholders

#### **FOR THE AQUINAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- To annually review and agree the Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- To annually agree attendance targets
- To take a lead role in supporting the School in the implementation of its approach to attendance and punctuality especially in response to parents in supporting unauthorised absence.

#### **Children Missing from Education (CME)**

When a child or young person is absent or missing from school, they could be at risk of significant harm through physical or sexual abuse, concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding Team. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or one of the Deputies in their absence) should be informed immediately if the school is informed by a parent that their child is missing; referrals will be made to the police, education welfare service and social services, as appropriate (Section 6 of the London Safeguarding Procedures) and Safeguarding Children Missing from Education (London Board, 2006).

#### **ABSENCE**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child(ren) attends the school on a regular and full-time basis. Every absence and half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence will lead to investigations by the school staff or our Education Welfare Officer whom can offer support and guidance. For extended periods of unauthorised absence where no explanations from parents are given may lead to a Penalty Notice or legal action being taken against parents.

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a student should miss school if they are too ill to attend. This is an example of an authorised absence. Medical evidence will be required, for any absences of a week or more and for anyone with three or more odd day absences over a 6-week period with no justifiable reason provided.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. I.e. student's birthday, having the day off to accompany a parent to a medical appointment, shopping for (uniform). This includes keeping students away from school unnecessarily, truancy and absences which the School considers to have not been properly explained.

### **Registration Procedures**

School attendance registers are legal documents. They are required by law to be called twice a day at the commencement of each AM and PM session. Staff regularly not taking an am/pm register could face a disciplinary, as these are a statutory requirement for all schools to perform.

### **FORM REGISTRATION**

Morning registration is taken at 8.30am. We expect all students to be in class at this time. Registers are taken electronically and where there is a breakdown of this system, paper registers can be collected from the Attendance Officer. During lesson registration, subject teachers will record only present (yes), absent (no) or late (late - and note the number of minutes late).

Students that are late before 9.50am will be marked as (L code) and will have their names written in the late book, administered by Attendance Officer. Any lateness will be challenged. Where there is a legitimate reason, for example, unavoidable known transport problems, then no further action is required; but when there is no good reason, for example, oversleeping, this will be recorded as a late and students will be sanctioned with a lunchtime detention that day.

4

---

Any lateness/absence after 9.50am (when the register closes) is recorded as an unauthorised absence for the am session. Pupils who are continually late after the close of register will be referred to the EWO and parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice (£120 fine reducing to £60 if paid within 21 days).

### **SUBJECT REGISTRATION**

It is essential that a register is taken at the start of every lesson for health & safety and safeguarding reasons. This will ensure that the School is able to monitor and reduce truancy from lessons. Attendance Officer will monitor lesson monitor/subject registers to determine any suspected truancy and will pass this information on to Year Coordinator/ tutors. If it is found that a student has been truanting, then this will be formally recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils arriving late to lessons must arrive with a yellow slip unless it is after a break or lunch. Lateness to lessons must be challenged and recorded. Staff must take appropriate action against students who are late without a valid reason, for example, issue a reprimand and a lunch time detention.

Teachers must ensure that they enter "late" into the computerised register should the student be late so that the attendance records are accurate.

### **REPORTING ABSENCE**

Parents are expected to telephone the School on the first day of absence before 8.00am. If we have not received a note/message of the Students' absence, the Attendance Officer will either telephone or text the parent/carer to establish the reason for the student not being in school and the length of time the student will be absent. A phone call must be made daily, or a note forwarded from the parent/carer to provide an update and the expected date of return. The School make daily contact

on the 5th day, should the student still be absent and no contact has been received from the parent/carer the school will alert the Education Welfare Officer.

If a student is absent for more than 5 consecutive days, medical evidence must be sent in to the school- this can be a doctor's certificate, GP/medical appointment card, copy of prescription, hospital letter or a note from the GP is required. This should be given to the Attendance Officer in order for the illness to be authorised.

A letter **must** be sent in with the student on the day the child returns to school. A reason of "ill" or "unwell" is not acceptable. If a note is not received, this absence will be marked as unauthorised, until confirmation of absence is received. Following 5 days of absence with no communication from the parent and all contact attempted, the School will inform the EWO who may carry out a home visit.

### **MEDICAL/HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS**

Parents and carers must try and ensure where possible that any medical appointments are made after school or during the school holiday period. Should a student have a medical appointment during an am or pm session, the expectation is they will be returned to school following the appointment and not be taken out of school for the whole day. They will be marked as unauthorised for the session if they do not return to school and no explanation is given. An appointment card will need to be shown to the Attendance Officer in order for the absence to be authorised in the first instance.

### **FIRST DAY CONTACT AND DEALING WITH ABSENCE**

Text messaging and a further follow up telephone call home will be carried out on the first day of absence if the parent has not contacted the school with reasons for absence. The Attendance Officer will attempt to contact any parent/carer on the first day of absence and establish the reason for absence. When a letter from the parent is not forthcoming, explaining the absence, the Attendance Officer will process a letter **{Letter A- Attendance concern}** to the parent/carer requesting a reason to cover the dates(s) concerned. When this has been received they will update the registers and code them appropriately.

5

---

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored through the following computerised processes:

- Daily lists of absences
- Follow up procedures on the first day of absence
- Subject registrations
- Weekly Statistics
- Rewards and sanctions statistics for attendance and punctuality

Where students are likely to have a period of long absence, for example from a period of illness, then teachers/tutors should liaise with parents and make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Year Coordinators and Attendance Officer have the major responsibility for identifying persistent poor attendance and punctuality.

The Attendance Lead will also analyse attendance data and look for patterns of absence and poor punctuality.

Where there is a significant pattern of absence, Attendance Officer will start intervention at 95% **{Letter A weekly if appropriate}** being sent home to parents/carers informing of the cause for concern and the negative impact on pupil/student learning. If there is no improvement in that four-week period, further contact will be made with parents/carers to discuss attendance and/or meet with the child's Year Co-ordinator.

- Where there have been three periods of absence, **Letter B (medical evidence letter)** will be sent to the parents advising them that any future absences will require them to produce medical evidence and failure to do so will result in the absences been unauthorised.
- If attendance drops to 92% or below then parents will receive a warning letter that they may be referred to the EWO and they will be invited in to meet with the Learning Director before this is the case. If attendance continues to be a concern a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer who will offer support and guidance, but may also refer to the LA to issue a Penalty Notice or consideration of legal proceedings.
- If there are persistent absence due to lateness after the close of registers, this may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who could issue a Penalty Notice.
- For attendance between 95%-98%, we expect Attendance Officer & Tutors to play an active role in advocating the importance of full attendance to both students and parents.

### EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that Head teacher may not authorise any holiday taken in term time. They are only allowed to consider a leave of absence if the circumstances are classed as exceptional, i.e. compassionate grounds and permission has been requested to the Head teacher. It is not the right of the parent to take children away during term time.

Parents will be expected to write to the Headteacher to request a leave of absence at least 3 weeks in advance.

The Attendance Officer and Attendance Lead and Education Welfare Officer works with Head teacher in overseeing any such requests from parents. If the School does not agree to the request, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If the leave of absence involves any travel arrangement, these must not be booked until permission is granted by the Head teacher.

The Attendance Officer and Attendance Lead pass the request to the Head teacher along with the attendance certificate and any other relevant information. The Headteacher will consider the request taking into account:

- The student's previous attendance history
- The time of the year regards any public or internal examinations
- Attendance and punctuality in the current and previous academic year
- The nature of the request and whether any other requests have been made

A letter of approval (or a letter stating the request is not approved) will then be sent to the parent/guardian clearly stipulating that approval is only given in these **exceptional circumstances** and that **no** further requests will be considered. Parents/Guardians are also informed that if any leave is taken beyond the dates agreed, a Penalty Notice\*\* could be issued to each parent and if applicable for each child.

**\*\* A Penalty Notice is a fine imposed where a parent fails to ensure that their child attends regularly. The Penalty Notice is £60 that must be paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in a prosecution by the Local Authority**

Signed:

.....  
Simon Murphy  
Headteacher

All staff are aware of the principles of data protection and will not process personal data unless necessary. The Academy safeguards the personal data it collects through the operation of the Trust's data protection policy and processes and the IT policy. In addition, the Academy has taken steps to ensure that all its contracts that process data have the GDPR compliant provisions.

*This policy has been amended following the impact of a critical incident being the COVID-19 Pandemic. The amendments are detailed in the appendix to this policy entitled COVID-19.*

## **Appendix 1**

### COVID-19

In order to suppress the impact of the COVID-19 virus, the Government directed that all schools in England and Wales must close from Monday 23 March until further notice. Thus, the Academy closed to children registered as pupils at the school from Monday 23 March 2020 except for those children:

- Whose parents are key workers and who cannot be looked after at home. Key workers are those that are detailed in the Government's Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining educational provision (19 March 2020)<sup>1</sup>; and
- Who are vulnerable. Vulnerable children include children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans. Schools are also asked to consider children at the fringes of social care, who may not have a social worker but are nevertheless vulnerable.  
Collectively referred to as the Priority Group.

7

---

In order to protect the Priority Group, the Academy implemented social distancing and hygiene measures as suggested by the DFE in order to minimise contact and the transmission of COVID-19.

Since 23 March, in order to protect vulnerable pupils, the Academy has:

- Maintained contact with the social worker responsible for the vulnerable pupil and parents/carers and encouraged attendance, where appropriate.
- Monitored attendance of vulnerable pupils where it has been agreed with the social worker and parent/carer that the pupil will attend. Non-attendance being notified to the social workers and recorded on the Academy's child protection records.
- Monitored the attendance of pupils with EHC plans where, through risk assessment in conjunction with the local authority, it has been agreed that the pupil will attend the Academy. Failure to attend has been reported to the local authority and recorded on the pupil's education plan.

Since 23 March, the school suspended the use of its usual attendance register and completed the attendance registers as directed by the DFE and the local authority.

---

From 1 June, the Academy is expecting all Priority Group pupils to return to school. In addition, from 15<sup>th</sup> June the Academy is expecting all eligible pupils in Years 10 and 12 to return to school.

### Registers

From 1 June, the Academy will resume taking its usual attendance register as well as completing the DFE's online educational setting status form. The Academy's daily register will be kept open so as to take into account the staggered opening times being implemented during this period. The academy will apply the registration codes as advised by the Government.

Parents and pupils are urged to adhere to their allotted time as it is vital in ensuring that contact between groups is kept to a minimum and social distancing requirements are observed. Parents/ pupils must advise the Headteacher if they are unable to observe these requirements.

### Non-attendance

Pupils that fall within the Priority Group and Eligible Group are encouraged to attend school unless they are ill, self-isolating for 14 days as a member of their household is suspected to have or does have COVID-19, extremely clinically vulnerable or shielding. Studies have confirmed that school is the best place for children to learn and the latest guidance from the government suggests that children and young people do not have a significantly adverse reaction to COVID-19. In addition, the Academy has implemented the government's guidance in order to make the school as safe an environment for pupils as is reasonably possible given the current situation and the associated risks.

8

---

However, if pupils within the Priority Group and Eligible Group fail to attend, non-attendance will not result in the sanctions as detailed in this policy and parent/carers will not be fined. However, the Academy will contact parents of pupils in the Priority Group and Eligible Group to discuss the reasons for non-attendance especially in relation to those pupils whose attendance was a concern prior to 23 March and who are not engaging in remote learning.

### Full Opening of the Academy

From the commencement of the autumn term in 2020, all pupils of compulsory school age must return to school. This appendix will no longer apply from the 2020 autumn term. The academy will apply its attendance policy as detailed in the main body of this policy, subject to the following as detailed in the government guidance:

1. A pupil with COVID-19 symptoms must not attend school for at least 7 days from first developing symptoms unless the pupil has a COVID19 test and receive a negative test result. In such cases, absence will be authorised.
2. A pupil who lives in a household where a member of the household has developed COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19, must self-isolate for 14 days from the date when the individual with the symptoms first developed them. In such cases, absence will be authorised.

3. A pupil has been designated as extremely clinically vulnerable or clinically vulnerable and has confirmation from medical professionals that he/she must not attend school. In such cases, absence will be authorised.