

# **Student Attendance Policy**

**Aspire Believe Achieve**

This policy document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher, and Governing Body of the Academy. No amendments can be made without their express instruction and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

**Review date:** July 2017  
**Next review date:** July 2018  
**Reviewed by:** Mr P Almond

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**APPROVED BY THE FGB - 4 July 2017**

## Statement of Intent

Bishop Rawstone Church of England Academy seeks to encourage good attendance from all students by offering an environment in which they feel welcomed, secure, and valued both for themselves and as part of the school community. School seeks to ensure that all students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for all to fulfil their true potential.

The school will comply with the latest Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (2006) which were updated on 1 September 2013.

Aims are to:

- improve the attendance of all students at school.
- reduce the number of students who fall into the category of persistent absence (PA)
- promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school and provide advice/support/guidance as appropriate to improve student's attendance.
- continue to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- promote effective partnerships with other services and agencies whenever needed.
- recognise the needs of the individual student when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence.
- identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of both regular and punctual attendance.

The school procedures will include guidance on:

- registration.
- what constitutes unauthorised absence.
- consistent use of symbols for authorised absence.
- granted leave under very exceptional circumstances
- systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for individual students.
- systems for dealing with absence.
- systems for reintegrating students who have been absent.
- systems for monitoring whole school attendance.
- appropriate alternative curricular arrangements.

## Leave In Term Time

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect his/her schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help their children and the school by not allowing their child to be absent in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time and all applications for leave must be made in advance by the parent of residence using the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form from the school office. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the requests are considered to be exceptional and these requests will be authorised by the Headteacher.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless a circumstance surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- the timing of the request;
- when a student is just starting school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- students should not be absent, (where possible), (both) immediately before and during assessment periods.
- when a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- where a student's attendance rate is already below 96% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the student does not return to school on the agreed date. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed.

#### Use of Penalty Notices

The school does have the option of issuing Fixed Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence.

#### Partnership Working

The school will work with support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school.

#### Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning

The school will adopt systems for monitoring attendance at both individual student and whole-school level. Letters will be sent advising of attendance and persistent absence and if necessary absences will be unauthorised which may lead to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

#### Review of Whole School Attendance Policy

The Trustees will review this policy and the associated procedures annually.

#### Rights and Responsibilities

The law requires parents or guardians to ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

All parties have a role to play.

Parents/Guardians will:

- ensure their children attend school and are punctual.
- encourage and support their children to attend school and be punctual.
- avoid any absences in term time.
- provide notes of explanation and/all medical evidence for any period of absence.
- ensure sufficient prior notice is given requesting leave for exceptional circumstances.
- alert the school if they become aware of attendance problems.
- attend attendance meetings if concerns are identified.
- participate in Attendance Parenting Contracts where appropriate.
- support the school in agreed interventions/action plans.
- expect contact if their child is absent and a message has not been received by 9.30am.
- expect frequent contact during periods of absence.

Students will:

- attend school.
- recognise behaviour needed (for example early bedtimes) to allow regular and punctual attendance.
- arrive punctually for registration.
- follow the signing in procedures for late registration.

School staff will:

- contribute to the promotion of raising the percentage attendance within school and reduction in the school's persistence absence figures.
- be advised by the Senior Leaders who monitor attendance and have overall responsibility for ensuring that the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance. They will take a lead in ensuring that attendance has a high profile within the school, and ensures that Heads of Year and designated support staff have adequate time to discharge the day-to-day responsibilities.

Designated staff will:

- continue to promote the importance of full attendance and to share attendance data and attendance targets.
- continue to train Group Tutors in the correct marking of attendance registers.
- continue to train all associate teachers in the correct marking of attendance registers.
- seek absence notes and/or medical evidence from students following a period of absence.
- check and amend absence codes.
- review and identify trends of absence.
- collate attendance data.
- analyse attendance data.
- contact the 'first point of contact' of absentees who have not notified school by 9.30am.
- monitor and record attendance of students who are educated elsewhere.
- implement re-integration programmes.
- contact parents regarding concerns by telephone and/or standard letter sent.
- involve the Senior Leadership Team if matters remain unresolved.
- arrange meetings with parents/guardians and draw up contracts for completion by all parties concerned.
- communicate and update all staff about attendance matters and school systems.
- ensure arrangements are in place in case of the absence of a Group Tutor.

- liaise with support agencies.
- submit attendance data to the CSA and the Systems Manager.

All staff will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for students.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum.
- provide sympathetic responses to any students' concerns.
- be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- ensure that attendance is seen as important for all students.
- assume responsibility to promote and monitor student attendance, despite the designated responsibilities.
- participate in training regarding school systems and procedures.

Trustees will:

- adopt the policy and review it annually.
- consider attendance and persistent absence as a regular agenda items.
- agree statutory targets for attendance for the school.

### Procedures

Registration:

- the school has a statutory duty to record student attendance twice a day and the registration periods are 8.55am – 9.00am and 1.55pm – 2.15pm. An entry will be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll.
- for late registration, students must sign the late sheet in the administration foyer.
- for signing out, the students and parents must sign the 'signing out' sheet.
- telephone messages from parents are written on a slip, by the administrative colleague who took the call, and slips are placed in registers in time for afternoon registration.
- all Group Tutors have a file in which to keep absence notes from parents.
- only the Attendance Officer under the direction of a member of the Senior Leadership Team is allowed to amend absence codes.
- attendance of dual registered and guest students is monitored.
- attendance of students taking part in school activities at registration time eg. music tuition is monitored by the Group Tutor.
- some absence codes, namely O and H, are to be used only with the approval of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Senior Leaders in the school will monitor students after any period of absence.

Decisions about no longer authorising absence will be made by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### Strategies for Promoting/Improving Attendance

School will:

- promote the need for excellent attendance with parents by regular reminders in the newsletter.
- following up absences with a sequence of letters and other procedures until the matter is resolved.

- reward good attendance, with points and special certificates and prizes presented at Achievement Assemblies and articles in the newsletters.
- regular monitoring the attendance of vulnerable groups of students.
- engage in spot checks.
- emphasise the importance of good attendance at transition from Key Stage 2.
- implement the “first day contact” system.
- promote anti-bullying and provide support to any student in respect of bullying.
- consider curriculum delivery and differentiated learning as a possible impact on attendance.
- engage in the managed transfer process in collaboration with local schools.
- research the use of associate teachers as learning mentors, and use senior staff in the involvement of mentoring underachievers.
- offer Pastoral Support Programmes to support reintegration following exclusion, medical absence (extended) and non-attendance/truancy.
- use lesson registration for Health and Safety reasons and action by the Heads of Year in respect of post-registration absence.
- agree individual student targets for attendance as appropriate.
- identify training for staff involved in the implementation of these strategies.

### Parenting Contracts - Attendance

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2002 makes provision for the use of Parenting Contracts where attendance is a cause for concern.

The school might ask parents to enter into a Parenting Contract when levels of lateness (after register is closed) and / or levels of absence become a cause for concern. This contract will identify the roles and responsibilities of parents/guardians, the school and the student for a mutually agreed period after which a review will be held.

There will be appropriate rewards/acknowledgement where contracts have proved successful and sanctions where contracts have been unsuccessful.

### Penalty Notices

The school will seek to adopt a range of strategies and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to promote excellent attendance and address poor attendance. Where such measures do not have the intended outcome, the Governing Body reserves the right to pursue legal proceedings, including the issuing of a fixed penalty notice, where a student has an unacceptable level of absence.

### Removal from Roll

School may remove students from roll in accordance with the criteria set out in Regulation 9 of The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended in 1997 and 2001).

Setting aside the issue of safeguarding a child’s safety and well-being, inconsistent practice in identifying students who have gone missing and delays in appropriate removal from roll of such students can have a significant impact on a school’s attendance figures. It is therefore important that the school has clear arrangements for identifying such students.

The procedures include the following:

- Senior Leadership Team, the Senior Leader Pastoral Care and the Heads of Year are responsible for identifying students who may have gone missing.
- Senior Leadership Team, the Senior Leader Pastoral Care and Heads of Year are responsible for promptly referring such students.
- The systems manager is responsible for completing the Common Transfer Form under the s2s system once a student has been traced elsewhere.
- advice will be sought before a student can be removed from roll when their whereabouts cannot be established.
- the Headteacher, after consultation with senior colleagues, is responsible for deciding whether a student can in fact be removed from roll.

#### School Based Systems for Dealing with Lateness

- the system for late registration – students must sign the late sheet in the administration foyer.
- the Group Tutor, Senior Leader Pastoral Care and the Heads of Year are responsible for working with students regarding punctuality.
- The Group Tutor, Senior Leader Pastoral Care and the Heads of Year are responsible for working with parents regarding punctuality.
- support will be offered to students by the Senior Leader Pastoral Care and the Heads of Year.
- standard letters are available for the Senior Leader Pastoral Care and their Heads of Year to use to promote punctuality.
- sanctions range from monitoring sheet, to report card, to student regularly reporting to the Senior Leader Pastoral Care or the Heads of Year.
- Parenting Contracts will be considered and implemented as necessary to intervene in the persistent lateness of their children.
- Penalty Notices will be considered and implemented to intervene in the persistent lateness of their children.
- Fixed Penalty Notices.

#### School Based Systems for Dealing with Absences

- system of 'first day contact'.
- letters of concern to parents/guardians.
- inviting parents into school for discussion.
- strategies for family support, including the use of Parenting Contracts where appropriate.
- further school based action with more senior staff involved.
- Fixed Penalty Notices.

#### Monitoring, Analysis, Evaluation and Action Planning

The school has identified the Senior Leader Pastoral Care and the Heads of Year as the people with specific responsibility for monitoring the whole school and year group attendance respectively, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's procedures:

- the office staff collect the data.
- data is collected and disseminated to relevant staff weekly (each Monday).
- feedback re analysis of attendance data will be provided to;  
Governors – by the Headteacher.

Staff – by the Senior Leader Pastoral Care or the Heads of Year at a Group Tutor Meeting.  
Students – by the Senior Leader Pastoral Care or the Heads of Year during a termly assembly.

The analysis might identify specific issues for the various audiences:

- patterns of broken weeks by individual students.
- patterns of absence for individual students.
- misuse or inconsistent use of absence codes across the school.
- trends in reasons for absence
  - extended medical leave
  - granted leave in exceptional circumstances
  - exclusions, etc.
- trends in particular groups (ethnic groups, gender), forms or years.