



THE BISHOPS' BLUE COAT CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

All of the policies that shape our lives and daily practice at Bishops` are informed by our Christian vision and values: to know, nurture and inspire our students to be the best version of themselves so that they can live `life in all its fullness` (John 10:10)

Is this policy statutory?	Yes
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1. Statement of Intent

Our vision statement states that:

The Bishops Blue Coat Church of England High School is an exciting place to be. We know, nurture, and inspire our community to be the best version of themselves through a better understanding of the Christian faith, and a rich set of opportunities that support and challenge our learners, so they are equipped to succeed. Through their engagement in society at Bishops and beyond, students make a positive difference through their wise action and a sense of responsibility. Our student's initiative, drive and resilience will enable them to flourish and live 'live in all its fullness'. (John 10:10)

Good attendance is a learnt behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School believes that good attendance is vital for all students if they are to gain from the rich set of opportunities, achieve and flourish. We are committed to removing any factor that might represent a hinderance to a child's fulfilment.

We are committed to:

- Building and promoting a culture of good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Intervening early and working with parents/carers and where necessary wider agencies to ensure health and safety of our students.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring parents/carers follow the framework set in section 7 of the education act 1996 which states that: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:
 - a) To age, ability, and aptitude and
 - b) To any special educational needs, he/she may have.Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DFE (2019) 'School Attendance'
- DFE (2016) 'Children Missing in Education'
- DFE (2020) 'keeping children safe in education'.
- DFE (2024) New National Framework

The policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- BEST behaviour policy
- Dignity and Respect policy
- Safeguarding policy
- SEND policy.

3. Aims

To manage and improve attendance effectively, our policy reinforces expectations to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

4. The Importance of Good Attendance

Good attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. At KS4, students not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and Maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of students not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

For the most vulnerable students, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra- familial harms.

5. Attendance Monitoring and Persistent Absence

Attendance is measured by sessions. There are two sessions per day (AM session and PM session) for example, if a child is absent for the whole day, they are absent for two sessions. These 'sessions' will be marked on the register as either authorised or unauthorised dependant on type of absence. The school defines a "persistent absence" (PA) when attendance drops below 90% (equivalent to 1 session missed per week) during the school year or across a half-term. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to a child education and prospects and the school requires the full support and co-operation of parents/carers to take tackle this effectively.

Students' attendance is monitored very closely and parents/carers of any child approaching 90% or moving below this level will receive letters of concern prior to reaching and after depending on number of incidents of absences. If a student is classified as PA, the schools pastoral support officers will work closely with parents/carers to support them to ensure that this status is removed as quickly as possible. If there has been no improvement in the student's attendance during this phase, then the school as a last resort will proceed with a fixed penalty notice and/or possible legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Section 576 Education Act 1996 - Meaning of "parent"

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a 'parent' and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:

- *all biological parents, whether they are married or not.*
- *any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a stepparent, guardian or other relative.*

- *any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.*

6. Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is monitored by the attendance officer, pastoral team and form tutors. School attendance officers and form tutors will regularly check the attendance of each student and will follow up all absences with appropriate methods. We hope that parents/carers will assist us by

- Informing the school on each day when their child is absent, parents/carers must provide a reason. Failure to provide the school with this in a timely manner may result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.
- Attending parent meetings regarding their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Providing us with any information regarding a child's medical condition that may have effect on his/hers attendance by completing a [Health Care and Allergy Plan](#)
- Supporting messages of positive attendance. School can support students' attendance; however, parents/carers are ultimately responsible for ensuring regular attendance and communicating with the school about their child's absence.

7. Reporting Absences

Parents/carer(s) are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence and for subsequent days. Medical evidence may be requested on occasion if the student's attendance is deemed as excessive or to better understand the student's absence and how best to support their return. You can report your child's absence by calling our main school line on 01244 313 806 and selecting the attendance voicemail or by emailing attendance@bishopschester.co.uk

If no communication has been received by the school an email/text message will go out to alert parents/carers; if there is still no response from parents/carers further attempts will be made and the absence may be marked as an unauthorised absence.

A telephone call may be made to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence, the school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify the reason and whether the absence is unauthorised or not
- Ask for medical evidence or other evidence relating to absence where appropriate.
- Identify the correct code to use to record the data on to the school census system.
- In the case of persistent absence arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance officer or a Pastoral support officer.

8. Registers

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents, and the register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school.

'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' (section 6)
Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, morning (a.m.) and once during the second session, afternoon (p.m.).

On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system as a priority and returned to the school office in a timely manner. This is used to download data to the School Census.
- Consider early identification, assessment, intervention, and support processes that may need to be implemented.

9. Authorised Absences

Authorised absences may be considered as the following (this list is not exhaustive)

- An absence for illness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointment which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency/ bereavement
- An absence requested for exceptional circumstances which has been approved for a set period by the headteacher (see section 13)

10. Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences may be considered as the following (this list is not exhaustive)

- Students kept away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy at any time during the school day
- Absences which have not been reported to the school or absences which have not been explained properly.
- Lateness after the registers have closed (9:05am) if a suitable reason for lateness has not been reached.
- Absences due to occasions such as shopping, looking after other children, birthdays etc, will automatically be marked as unauthorised.
- Leaving school for no reason without prior agreement during the school day.

11. Lateness

Punctuality is of utmost importance. Lateness to school and lateness to lessons is sanctioned as an infringement of the Behaviour Policy. Students with poor punctuality will be monitored by their form tutors and pastoral team. Lateness due to unforeseen circumstances such as buses will not result in a consequence.

The school day begins at 8.45am with a movement bell to prompt students to move to period 1 which starts at 8.50am promptly. Students arriving in school after 8:50am and before 9:15am will be coded as 'L' (lateness) which may lead to consequences if lateness is not approved by the school. If

the student arrives after 9:15 and before 9:50 (with no valid reason from the student's parent(s)/carer(s) A 'U' (unauthorised) code will be logged for excessive lateness), if the student signs in any time after this without a valid reason the AM session will be logged as unauthorised. Both 'U' and 'O' codes will have a negative impact on attendance and will be considered with all other unauthorised absences.

12. Truancy

Students are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission. Any student with permission to leave the school must sign out at reception and sign back in on their return.

Students are not permitted anywhere else on school grounds during lesson time without permission. If a student is missing from a lesson, a member of our 'on-call' team will investigate and conduct a thorough search of the school premises. If after undertaking a search and necessary checks the student is still missing, the parent(s)/carer(s) will be notified. When the student has been located, a designated member of staff will ensure that the student is safe and well.

The school defines truancy as any absences of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. The truancy will be marked as an unauthorised absence and will incur additional school sanctions and/or a fixed notice penalty.

13. Religious Observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious celebrations/festivals. Parents must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

14. Requesting Time off within Term Time

The Bishops Blue Coat High School strongly urges parents/carers not to book time off during term time as this can have a detrimental effect on a student's progress and attainment. There is no automatic entitlement in law to allow time off for students. Absences for exceptional circumstances may be granted, these include:

- 1) Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holiday.
- 2) Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional.
- 3) The death or terminal illness of a person close to the immediate family.
- 4) To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the immediate family.
- 5) Representation for an organisation at the organisations address
- 6) To attend an educational or sporting opportunity.

Any request for time off can be made by clicking on [Request for Absence during Term Time](#)
If your request is not authorised and you still choose to take your child out of school during the requested period, the leave of absence will be recorded on your child's registration record as unauthorised, and a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued to each parent.

15. Fixed Penalty Notices

The Bishops Blue Coat High School may request the local authority to issue 'penalty notices' in respect of a persistent unauthorised absence in accordance with section 444 of the education act 1996. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued if a student has 10 or more unauthorised sessions of absences.

A 'Notice to improve' will be issued to parents(s)/carer(s) before any penalty notices are served, unless the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday in term time. In cases of persistent or prolonged absence (known as PA) the school will request that the parental/carers contact their GP or health professionals to provide medical evidence to the school. [Frequently Asked Questions about FPNs](#)

If medical evidence is not provided and the unauthorised absences go in excess of over 10 sessions, the school will consider a Fixed Penalty notice which are issued per child to each parent who fails to ensure their child's attendance at school and must pay £80 per parent within 21 days. If unpaid the fine will increase to £180 per parent which must be paid within 28 days. There is a limit of two Fixed Notice penalties within a three-year period (starting from date of first Fixed Notice Penalty) any further unauthorised absences, the local authority may pursue legal action such as prosecution.

16. Working with other Agencies

Poor attendance can be the result of difficulties faced by a child or family, and a cause of other problems such as exclusions; students with low levels of attendance tend to have other complex issues therefore a co-ordinated approach by several agencies can assist these students and their families. The school will contact and work closely with these agencies where necessary.

The school's pastoral support officers will work closely with a local authority EWO case officer and request support meetings where necessary. This ensures correct and consistent procedures are being applied by the school together with the necessary legal support.

17. The Role of The School

- To fulfil our statutory obligations to keeping accurate records of attendance and punctuality, and provide regular reports to parents/carers, governors, and local authority (LA)
- To create a culture in which full attendance is the norm.
- To monitor patterns of attendance and punctuality across all year groups and follow up as appropriate.
- To contact parents/ carers in relation to absences. If there has been no contact established between the school and home after 5 days of absence a pastoral officer will make a home visit.
- To have clear procedures in place and to be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions relating to attendance.
- The school will not authorise any absences within term time unless it is deemed as 'exceptional' and will be decided on a case by case basis at schools discretion.
- The school will work with external agencies to ensure good attendance.
- To support students in their return to school after a long absence.
- The school will ensure that every student has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

- The school will inform the LA of any student being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
 - 1) Are being educated from home.
 - 2) No longer live within a reasonable distance of registered school.
 - 3) Have an authorised medical note.
 - 4) Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
 - 5) Have been permanently excluded.

18. The Role of The Student

- Aim for 100% attendance and punctuality.
- Poor Punctuality Is not acceptable; students who arrive late disrupt lessons and miss valuable teaching time.
- All students are expected to be in school for 8.45am for an 8.50am start.
- Students who arrive after 8:50 should sign in at reception and go straight to their lesson.

19. The Role of Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers with parental responsibility have a legal responsibility for ensure that their child attends the school regularly and on time, keeping their child off only for genuine reasons.
- Parents/carers should aim to book medical/dentist appointment outside of school hours.
- Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.
- Should contact the school on the first day of absence and subsequent day(s) and wherever possible indicate the day of return.
- Only the school in context with the law can authorise an absence.
- Unexplained absences will be investigated, if parents fail to support the school in providing a reason for an unexplained absence, that absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- Parents who fail to fulfil their responsibilities can expect legal action, this may include:
 - 1) Fixed penalty notices
 - 2) Prosecutions
 - 3) Parenting orders

20. The Role of Pastoral Officers

- To work with Attendance Officer/ Form tutors and Year Leaders to follow up poor attendance.
- To meet with the Deputy headteacher (responsible for school attendance) to discuss policy and individual concerns.
- To make home visits and maintain contact between parents/carers, school, and other external agencies.
- To conduct weekly analysis of attendance data and inform form tutors and year leaders of concerns.
- To initiate any action regarding attendance between parents/carers and the school.
- To advise the headteacher for authorising/ not authorising term time holiday requests.

- To advise the headteacher on fixed term penalty notices and complete all necessary documentation.
- Liaise with the LA EWO services with all prosecutions and if necessary, represent the school in official hearings or court.

21. Young Carers

The school understands the difficulties young carers face and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school. Each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

22. Looked After Children

Absence for students with a social worker, has been historically higher, with a quarter of children who have ever needed a social worker persistently absent compared to less than 10% of those who had never been in need. School will work with the Virtual School to support looked after children and will notify social workers of any absences.

23. Disadvantaged First

The school adopts a 'disadvantaged first' approach where disadvantage student is identified and supported. The attendance of disadvantaged students is monitored through social inclusion meetings that allow for inclusion team to discuss individual students and plan interventions and support to improve attendance and achievement.

24. Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance

The Bishops Blue Coat High School aims to support the local authority and ensure that all children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs, and who would not receive suitable education without such provision, continue to have access to as much education as their medical need allows to enable them to reach their full potential. Due to the nature of their health needs, some children may be admitted to hospital or place in alternative forms of education provision.

We recognise that, wherever possible, pupils should receive their education within their school and the aim of the provision will be to regenerate pupils back into school as soon as they are well enough.

We understand that we have a continuing role in a pupil's education whilst they are not attending the school and will work with the local authority, healthcare partners and families to ensure that all children with medical needs receive the right level of support to enable them to maintain links with their education.

25. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to the following.

- Education act 1996
- Equality act 2010

- Data Protection Act 2018
- DFE (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.
- DFE (2015) 'supporting pupils with medical conditions' [Health Care and Allergy Plan](#)
- DFE (2024) New National Framework

26. Local Authority Duties

The LA must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support the LA in doing so. Further details on the responsibilities of the LA can be found in their policy on [Access to Education for Children and Young people with Medical Needs](#)

27. The Role of The Local Authority and Working with Children who have Medical Needs

- Provide education as soon as its clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil.
- Ensure the education pupils receive is of a good quality which allows them to take appropriate qualifications and prevents them from falling behind their peers in school.
- Address the needs of the individual pupils in arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of the children with additional health needs and ensures parents know who this is.
- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their agreements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for the child and that it is providing suitable education.
- Give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.

28. Referral Process

A referral to the Education Access Team must originate from the mainstream school, using form MET1 (Appendix B) and must be supported by medical confirmation from one of the following health professionals:

- Consultant Paediatrician Consultant
- Child Psychiatrist or Adolescent Psychiatrist
- Hospital Consultant

Whilst it is recognised that medical evidence is central to the referral, supporting evidence from a General Practitioner alone cannot be accepted. The health professional will need to complete Part B of the MET1 form and return it to the school. We then submit the fully completed form to the Education Access Team. The referral will be considered at a fortnightly Case Planning Meeting. Decisions on opening of cases are made by officers from the Local Authority and the Headteacher of Ancora House School.

Contact details for this service are below, the medical needs form can be accessed via [Medical needs referral form](#). Email: MedicalNeeds@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

By post: Education Access Team (Education Infrastructure, 3rd floor, Nicholas House) Cheshire West and Chester Council, 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE.
Telephone: 01244 972825

29. Provision

In Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority, the statutory duty to provide education for pupils with medical needs is delivered by Ancora House School. This provision is registered with the Department for Education and is regulated by OFSTED standards.

The Department for Education guidance 2013, states that full time education must be arranged for a child with health needs, or as much education as their health condition allows. If education is one-to-one teaching the number of teaching hours could be less as the provision is more concentrated. The quality of the education provision, as defined in the statutory guidance Alternative Provision (2013), should allow pupils to take appropriate qualifications, prevent them from slipping behind their peers in school and allow them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.

Any teaching or e-learning should initially focus on the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. A broad and balanced curriculum is aimed for, however it may be more appropriate for a pupil, dependant on health needs, to focus on fewer core subjects and aim to achieve their best, rather than focus too much on providing access to a broader curriculum.

To assist with reintegration back to school access to nurture group provision and / or school inclusion provision is designed to support pupils on this journey. The Education Outreach Officer may assist with transporting a pupil to the Nurture Group as part of an introductory session. Parents retain their statutory responsibility to arrange suitable transport thereafter.

30. Elective Home Education

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child is included in appropriate full-time education. Elective Home Education (EHE) is when a parent or carer decides to educate their child at home. Where parents/carers orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated, pastoral teams will work with parents/carers to discuss the reasons and consider additional support.

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that they are home educating, the school will delete the child's name from the admission register and inform the local authority. Effective information sharing between parents/carers, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Children missing from education are children of compulsory school age who:

- Don't have a school place
- Are not receiving a suitable education in any other way Children aren't missing from education if they:
- Have a school place but aren't attending regularly
- Are being educated at home
- Following Children Missing in Education 2016 the Attendance Officer will notify the Local Authority of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive schools' days without provision of reasonable explanation.

31. Impact

All pupils will achieve well by developing knowledge and skills on their journey through school. Due to robust monitoring of attendance, all pupils, including vulnerable children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will have fair and equitable access to school to achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils will leave Bishops Bluecoat Church of England High School ready for a successful transition to secondary education/further education or employment.

The table below sets out the attendance targets and at what stage parents/carers will be contacted about their child's attendance.

