



Bedale High School Attendance Policy 2016/17

School **BEDALE HIGH SCHOOL**

Headteacher **MRS S REES**

Named personnel with designated responsibility for this policy

Academic year	Designated Senior Person	Nominated Governor	Chair of Governors
2016/17	Ms R Haydon	Mr M Hughes	Mr G Price

Policy Review dates

Review Date	Changes made	By whom	Date Shared with staff
2016			

Date Ratified by Governors	Review Date
September 2016	September 2017

Bedale High School Attendance Policy

Attendance is directly linked to achievement. We work to ensure all students reach their potential therefore intervention regarding concerns about attendance is integral to the work of the Pastoral Team.

Introduction

Excellent attendance promotes excellent learning. Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. Bedale High School believe that regular school attendance is crucial to allowing 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.

Bedale High School values all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to early identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. Bedale High School believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community; our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour and discipline and inclusion policies.

This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

We define our key levels of attendance as:

Principles

Bedale High School believe the following important principles underpin our approach to managing attendance:

- Students and parents/carers understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality.
- All school staff, including governors, administrative and support staff understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality
- Clear procedures for supporting students to come to school

Attendance Description

	Approximately days lost per year	Approximately weeks lost per year
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98 – 100%	Excellent	0 to 4	Less than 1
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95 – 98%	Good	5 to 9	1 to 2
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93 – 95%	Satisfactory	10 to 13	2 to 3
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85 – 93%	Unsatisfactory	14 to 28	3 to 6
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Below 80%	Persistent Absence	More than 29	More than 6
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- Parents/carers and students having the opportunity to raise concerns and share in addressing those concerns
- Allocating resources e.g. time, people, space to support the policy
- Rewarding students who have for good attendance and those who strive to improve their attendance.
- Identifying patterns of absence and intervening early. Research shows patterns of attendance are established early in a school career. Children who miss significant amounts of their education in primary schools are more likely to truant later on. Bedale High School will work with the school partnership using data to identify students early.
- Sanctions for failing to ensure regular attendance are fully understood by the whole school community and parents/carers.

Rights/Roles/ Responsibilities

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of students who miss more than 50 per cent of school only three per cent achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including Maths and English. Bedale High School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider school community.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers.
- Have a named senior manager to lead on attendance at Bedale High School this is the Assistant Headteacher, who co-ordinates the work of the Pastoral Team on attendance.
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- **Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.**
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and DFE as required and on time.
- Have clear systems in school to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to develop strategies and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers

- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Make staff aware of the Attendance Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Have a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and DfE as required and on time
- Have systems in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Collate and analyse attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to develop solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance including a referral to the Prevention Team and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Pastoral Leaders will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve. A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Parents/Carers will:

- Talk to their son/daughter about school and their experiences whilst there. Take a positive interest in their son/daughter's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home
- Encourage their son/daughter to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their son/daughter is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their son/daughter is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their son/daughter's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their son/daughter's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, going to bed at an appropriate time, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their son/daughter off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their son/daughter on holiday during term-time.

Legal Framework

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen. From September 2015 they are required to continue until their 18th birthday.

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. This responsibility is undertaken by Education Welfare.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, expect 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 student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Categorising absence

- Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation and or evidence for the student's absence has been received.
- Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their son/daughter is ill is acceptable. Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. or in some cases a doctor's note.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Excluded (No alternative provision made)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Head of House will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT CHANGES TO LEGISLATION REGARDING LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME (SEPT 2013)

The Department for Education requires Local Authorities to implement government amendments to the regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-

time, which will come into force on the 1st September 2013. The new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Therefore Headteachers will only be able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will still be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right. The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Application forms are available from your child's school. Headteachers will also welcome early discussion with you around potential applications.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

This is not an exhaustive list and headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. Where a headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which does not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the headteacher is, however, final.

Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Amendments to 2007 Penalty Notice regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1st September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices in line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecution if the fine is not paid.

Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

Can schools decide whether parents should be prosecuted or not? No. Only local authorities can make decisions on whether parents should be prosecuted for school attendance offences. All schools (including academies) have a duty to refer regular absence (authorised and unauthorised) to the relevant local authority. This may include any evidence to show how they supported the pupil and parent to improve attendance. It is for each local authority to judge each referral on its own merits and make a decision on the next probable cause of action.

It is the statutory duty of local authorities to carry out investigations including witness statements leading up to prosecutions. Local authorities should conduct all investigations in accordance with PACE and Attorney General's Guidelines for Crown Prosecutors. Local authorities cannot delegate this function to schools (including academies) or charge them for this service.

Definition of a parent

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and school will decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

School Attendance Orders

If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.

Education Supervision Orders

The local authority must consider applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting parents¹⁶. A local authority may apply for an ESO instead of or as well as prosecuting parents. The order is placed on the child and the local authority is appointed by the court to supervise that child's education either at a school or at home for a specified period of time.

Late Arrival

- Registration begins at 8.45am, students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.05am. Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late after registration, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session. On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the school office to sign in to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.
- Absence will only be **authorised** if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of attendance at a medical appointment.
- The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.
- As a school, we are aware lateness can severely affect achievement. We monitor punctuality closely and have strategies in place to address lateness. We run late gate weeks twice half termly. Senior staff monitor the gates and immediate sanctions result if students are late which escalate if lateness becomes persistent. Awareness of the impact of lateness is raised with students, staff and parents regularly.

Un-authorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms/shoes
- Having hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for teacher training (or other) purposes
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

Contact with Parents

Bedale High School runs a first day absence calling system if students are not in lessons by 9.30am. A telephone call will be made to parents asking them to provide a reason for absence. Safeguarding of our students is of utmost importance to us.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

Using Attendance Data

- Students' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.
- Indicators next to a student's name will show if their attendance has stayed the same, improved or deteriorated. This student level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention.
- Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends at whole school and individual student levels. This will be used to inform whole school/partnership strategies to improve attendance and attainment and will include analysis of attendance of specific groups e.g. Girls/Boys; Special Educational Needs (SEN), Free School Meals (FSM) (Ever 6); Looked After Children (LAC) or Forces Children.
- Bedale High School will share attendance data with the DFE and the local authority as required.
- All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Attendance and punctuality – procedures 2015

- National policies relating to leave of absence adhered to and shared with parents
- Attendance Policy – shared with parents
- First Day Response
- Attendance statistics for individuals go home on Progress Monitoring Report
- Focus for school assemblies each term.
- Inter-house competition – rewards given for best attending tutor group in assembly on weekly basis.
- Article in half termly newsletter to parents, emphasising the school target of 95.8% and giving the results of inter-house competition and winning tutor group for each half term.
- 100% Attendance certificates given out each half term and gold certificates given out for 100% attendance at the end of the year.
- Weekly Attendance meeting in which Heads of House review all the attendance data and draw up points for action. In first instance (students' attendance drops below 93%) there is a meeting between the Head of House and student. A letter is sent out. Attendance monitored.
- Attendance cards. Students with on-going poor attendance are put on attendance cards by tutor. The tutor and student select strategies that they feel would help the student improve their attendance and record them on the card. They set an attendance target. The student collects a stamp for each day they are present and get a reward for each week that they have completed a full week for up to four weeks. Parents are informed by letter.
- Back to School interviews. Tutors are asked to conduct "Back to School" interviews with students who have been away. Script circulated to tutors.
- Attendance Panel Meetings – parents of students with poor attenders are asked to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting comprising of Head of House, Assistant Head (pastoral), parents and child. Issues discussed and targets set. Progress is then reviewed in weekly attendance team meetings.

A "whole school" approach which reinforces good attendance, highlights the links between attendance and attainment and permeates all aspects of school life;

- School ethos and culture that supports good attendance;
- School leadership / A school attendance leader – a member of the senior leadership team to ensure there is a strategic lead for attendance in school;
- Awareness and involvement of Board of Governors regarding attendance issue including endorsement of attendance policies;
- Attendance policies which are regularly reviewed and modified;
- Targets for attendance
 - Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities of schools;
 - Consistent application of attendance codes, practice and procedures;
 - Designated staff with responsibility for attendance e.g.: Attendance Manager.

Specific Actions

1. Increased use of the Early Prevention Team where appropriate in place of ESW
2. Year 6 Transition – target poor attenders (esp FSM) in advance. Have meeting with parents before they arrive to lay out expectation and put support in place.
3. Use Parents Eve to focus on attendance. Selected parents to make appointments with Learning Leader to evaluate impact of poor attendance and draw up Individual Attendance Plans.
4. Issue certificates for improved attendance as well as 100% attendance.
5. Develop use of student mentors (“buddies”) for students returning after prolonged absence.
6. Noticeboard for parents at parents’ eve emphasising the importance of attendance.
7. Attendees of the half term board – those with 100% attendance for last half term names go up
8. Emphasise issue at parent information evenings focusing on legality of taking time out during term time, the impact on attainment, combatting the “odd day” attitude, combatting the “time off for minor illness” attitude and emphasising the negative impact of making avoidable medical appointments in term time.
9. Providing the Tutors with attendance data for their groups compared to national.

Home-School liaison

First day contact rule – if not possible by end of the day – must pass it on to R Haydon.