

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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This policy must be read in conjunction with our Children Missing Education and Safeguarding Policies.

Philosophy

Bedford Greenacre Independent School is committed to maximising attendance for all pupils to enable them to benefit fully from their education. We believe that regular attendance is vital for effective learning and maintaining peer relationships, which is why we work closely with the Educational Welfare Service to ensure that attendance is in line with the most up to date guidance.

The school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise the importance of establishing strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

We will monitor, identify and address, as speedily as possible, any problems affecting attendance that falls on or below 95% and will adopt, at all times, a clearly focused approach aimed at not having pupils' attendance fall below 90%.

The school will ensure that all pupils and families feel supported and valued.

It is a legal obligation of all parents/carers to ensure their child attends regularly, by law all pupils of compulsory school age must get a proper full-time education.

Legal Frameworks and guidance

- Education Act 1996, section 444
- Access to Education for Pupils and Young People with Medical Needs
- Working together to improve school attendance 2024
- School census Guide 2020, DfE-00142-2020
- Child Missing Education Procedures
- The Equality Act 2010
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Keeping Pupils Safe In Education 2023
- Bedford Borough Council – Attendance Toolkit

Principles

Staff are aware of the registration process and receive instruction on registration regulations. Registers are completed accurately morning and afternoon, and attendance is regularly monitored. Parents should contact school early on the first day of and on all subsequent days of absence. Senior managers and school governors will regularly evaluate attendance procedures.

Rights and Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time. Pupils who do experience difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day on time, appropriately dressed and in fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, **parents are required to notify the school** of the reason, early on the first day of absence either by phone or by emailing the class form tutor or the school office.

School staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Staff will convey high expectations to pupils regarding attendance and punctuality.

Registration

Registers will be called promptly at 8.45 am and at 3.55 pm including the Sixth Form.

Registers are called promptly at 8:45am, where a pupil arrives late, before the close of registration or 30mins after the register has been taken (before 9:15am), they will be recorded as late, if a pupil arrives after 9:15am they will be recorded as 'U' unauthorised absence arrived after the close of registration.

Pupils arriving late to registrations may face a sanction if the school has not been informed by a parent of genuine reason for lateness. Ongoing lateness may result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

Sixth Form students leaving the premises

For sixth formers who may be leaving the premises during the day, it is a requirement that they sign out of school at the Sixth Form office.

Requests for Absence from parents

Parents are asked to note that the school would discourage parents from taking their pupils out of school, at any stage, during the term and that full attendance is expected, up to and including the last day of each term.

Please note that requests for a family holiday during term time will not be authorized and will be recorded as unauthorised absences. Only requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances will be considered. This is in accordance with the statutory document Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

Authorisation requests for absence in exceptional circumstances may be sought by contacting Mr Evans for Seniors or Mrs Djukic for Juniors, by completing an application for Leave of Absence form. This must be completed and returned to the school office AT LEAST TWO WEEKS before the date when the period of absence is to start.

Persistent Absence

The DFE states that a child has persistent absence when they have missed more than 10% of possible attendance sessions. This means any child with attendance below 90% for a full academic year.

In line with Government guidelines, the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the attendance of individual pupils and work with parents to ensure that additional steps are taken to support any pupil with persistent absence. This will include pupils who have long term illnesses or who have been suspended from school.

The school must alert the Local Authority (LA) about any pupil who misses 15 consecutive or cumulative days due to illness, as they may need additional support from the LA.

The support may be in the form of a phone call or letter, drawing parents' attention to their child's absence, offering an attendance support plan or meeting with members of the senior leadership team to discuss individual support. In addition, the school will also consult Education Welfare Teams for the area in which the child resides.

The school will ensure that those missing school because of mental or physical ill health, or those with SEND, will be given extra support, by considering the individual needs of pupils.

Where attendance is poor the Local Authority does have powers to take action to enforce school attendance. Periods of unauthorised absence where the pupil is not known to be ill, and the parents/guardians cannot be contacted can lead to a pupil being removed from the school roll.

Recording Absence

All staff must record accurately whether a pupil is present or absent.

Form tutors must be aware of their class's attendance percentage and be pro-active in promoting good attendance.

Admission and attendance registers will be kept electronically, and all entries in these registers will be preserved for 6 years

Procedures for Absenteeism

Data analysis will be undertaken and kept weekly, focusing on individuals and cohorts with attendance problems, in order to target improvement for those pupils who need it the most.

At Bedford Greenacre Independent School, we will attempt to address irregular and/or non-attendance as soon as it is identified. The actions of the school could include:

- A phone call from your child's form tutor to discuss absence concerns.
- A Letter home to inform you of absence monitoring.
- A meeting with an attendance champion to discuss putting an attendance support plan in place. At this point you may provide medical or other evidence for further absences.
- Referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Meetings with the EWO and a member of the senior leadership team (SLT), possible live case opening.
- A meeting with parents/SLT and Chair of Governors (or any other Governor) to discuss attendance difficulties.
- Consulting with the schools' Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy DSL, and if appropriate, completing a Cause for Concern Form and a Child Missing Education (CME) Checklist (see Children Missing Education Policy). The Schools' DSL/Deputy DSL will then follow the procedure detailed in the schools' Safeguarding Children Policy and notify the Bedford Borough Children Missing Education Officer.

Children Missing Education Office
Education Welfare Service
Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP

01234 228178 childrenmissingeducation@bedford.gov.uk

In extreme cases setting up an agreement with the Chair of Governors and parents of the child regarding the attendance which the parents will be required to sign. Where this does not result in the improvement in attendance the parents may be asked to remove their child from the school. Should this be the case the Bedford Borough Children Missing Education Officer will be notified and further non-attendance in the maintained sector may result in prosecution of both parents.