



THE BEWDLEY SCHOOL

Learning for Life - Achievement for All

Attendance Policy

Person Responsible: Deputy Head Teacher

Adoption Date: September 2021

Review Date: September 2022

The school's 'Attendance policy' operates in conjunction with other policies including the 'Behaviour Policy', 'E-Safety policy' 'Exclusions Policy' and 'Safeguarding policy'

Introduction

Our expectation is for all students to have 100% attendance and 100% punctuality to school and all lessons. There is strong statistical evidence to show that students who achieve this are more successful in school, make greater progress and that they are more likely to achieve their academic potential. The table below further highlights the link between attendance and learning:

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
100%	0 days	0 weeks	0 lessons
95%	9 days	2 weeks	60 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	120 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	180 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	240 lessons

****Absence at 90% or below is classed as Persistent Absence***

In addition to the academic reasons for attendance, national research also shows:

- Children with poor attendance often become the victims of bullying
- Prolonged absence from school can lead to loneliness. It can make it harder for your child to get along with other children and make friends.

At The Bewdley School we value achievement of every kind and we believe that we all respond well to having high expectations placed upon us.

Responsibilities

Although the legal responsibility for regular attendance at school rests with parents/carers we regard the encouragement of good standards of attendance as a partnership with families designed to support the development of each individual student's potential.

If parents/carers have any concerns about their son/daughter's attendance or are concerned that there may be underlying reasons for him/her failing to attend school, then they should contact us immediately.

For specific responsibilities for the governing body, staff and students, please see Appendix A

Overview

All students must arrive to school and all lessons on time. - School begins promptly with lesson 1 at 8.50am [warning bell is at 8.45am]. Students are expected to be in school by no later than 8.40am. If a student arrives late without an appropriate reason (for example a medical appointment, supported by a letter or appointment card) they will be expected to receive a sanction i.e. detention at break/lunch. If a student absconds from school during the day, then he/she has chosen to place him/herself beyond our care. In such circumstances, parents/carers will be contacted and a sanction will be issued.

The school uses SIMs to record student attendance during am/pm sessions and for all lessons. We ask that if a student cannot attend school on a particular day, that the parent/carer either phone 01299 403277 selecting option 1 or 01299 406828, text 07537 436366, e-mail absence@bewdley.worcs.sch.uk or via the school app (MyEd) to report the absence. We ask that this procedure is repeated for any subsequent days' absence. The school's Attendance Officer checks the registers and if a student is still absent and no communication has been received from the student's parent/carer then contact will be made with the student's parent/carer – we aim to do this by 11.30am.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Legally the school is required to distinguish and report on authorised and unauthorised student absence.

Authorised Absence

A student's absence will be treated as authorised if he/she is unable to attend school due to illness, medical, dental treatment, the death of a close family member or where permission has been granted by the headteacher. Other authorised circumstances such as student study leave, work experience and educational visits will be entered by the school.

Parents/carers should note that ideally all medical and dental appointments should be arranged for after school so that students do not miss any lessons. Where this proves to be impossible then students should bring an appointment card to school, show it to their head of year and/or main reception who will issue them with an Exeat? which details that they will need to leave the school at a specific time. The student should then sign out at reception before leaving the school. In order that we might be sure of the whereabouts and safety of our students we ask that parents/carers ring the school by 9:00am on the morning of the first day of absence to notify us of the situation as described above.

On return to school, a letter signed by the parents/carers is required to confirm the reason for absence and the dates involved. We ask that this letter is brought to school on the first day back.

In cases of long term absence or where a student's attendance is causing concern, doctor's notes or copies of medication will be requested.

Unauthorised Absence

If an absence cannot be authorised or a reason for absence is not forthcoming the absence will be treated as unauthorised and parents/carers will be contacted by the school in order to seek a valid reason. It is at the school's discretion as to whether absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Extended Periods of Absence (including Holidays)

Please note, under recent amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) regulations, 2006, headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. All applications are assessed on an individual basis by the headteacher. In such exceptional circumstances, headteachers determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. The government has not defined the 'exceptional circumstances' referred to in the amended regulations. It is for the headteacher to decide what he views as exceptional circumstances. However, under these amendments, family holidays do **NOT** qualify as exceptional circumstances. However, leave to attend a high level sporting commitment or to travel with the family due to the illness of a very close family member may be granted leave as exceptional circumstances. The school term dates are published a year in advance and are made available on the

school website in the expectation that parents/carers will ensure that holidays are taken during school holiday times.

The strongest factor in underperformance at GCSE and A Level is irregular or poor attendance and it is our belief that we would be failing in our responsibility if we sanctioned time off school in all but the most exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers are therefore asked to respect these new regulations under which we must now work, and that if there is a need to take your son/daughter out of school during term time, it must be made very clear in the request how the circumstances are exceptional. In such circumstances, requests for the school to authorise absence should be made by writing to the headteacher, in advance; not in retrospect.

Applications for leave of absence, which are made and refused, will result in the absence being unauthorised, which may result in legal action against the parent/carer, by Penalty Notice, if the student is absent from school during that period.

Work and absence

Every lesson missed is an opportunity missed. Although every effort is made to support student in catching up with work missed, group activities, oral work, practical work etc. simply cannot be made up, so students inevitably lose out and their progress will be affected.

- Students who have permission to be absent from school (see above) are expected to get work in advance from teachers and make up any written work missed as soon as they can.
- Students who are off school for an extended length of time may obtain work to complete during their absence. This may be obtained by contacting the appropriate year office.
- Students who are absent without notice (e.g. due to illness) are expected to complete all work missed. We ask that parents/carers also monitor this, to ensure all work is completed.

Children Missing Education

- We ask all parents/carers to provide us with more than one emergency contact number. This gives us additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.
- The Attendance Officer prioritises phone calls and home visits for key students.
- The designated safeguarding lead/deputy designated safeguarding lead(s) (DSL) follows appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries eg discussions with neighbours, relatives, landlords etc to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.
- There may be occasion where we have been unable to contact parents/carers after 2 days, have no information as to the whereabouts of the student, there is no answer at the home address and neighbours do not know of their whereabouts. In that case, the DSL or Attendance Officer will request the police do a safe and well check on the second or third day of absence. We inform social services, through the Worcestershire Family Front Door, to let them know we have requested a police safe and well check.
- We inform the local authority of any student who has missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- When appropriate, the DSL will make a referral to social services and/or police.

Monitoring

There are a number of staff at the school who monitor attendance and punctuality: designated member of SLT team, Attendance Officer (AO); form tutor; and head of year.

- A designated member of the SLT team has oversight of the whole system. The designated member of the SLT's role is to oversee attendance and punctuality procedures and be aware of students who are a cause for concern. This member of staff keeps the headteacher informed of any attendance/punctuality concerns.
- The Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of all students and informing the heads of year of any causes for concern. The Attendance Officer checks the registers and if a student is still absent by 9:00am and no communication has been received from the student's parent/carer then contact will be made with the student's parent/carer.
- The Attendance Officer will provide data to show each Year group's attendance, authorised absence, unauthorised absence and persistent absence. This information will be disseminated to the head of year, headteacher, and designated member of SLT.
- The form tutor's role is to monitor the attendance and punctuality of his/her tutor group on a daily basis and ensure every student knows his/her attendance.
- The tutor is also responsible for ensuring that absence notes are collected on a student's return to school. The tutor is responsible for informing the head of year about students who are persistently late.
- The head of year working in conjunction with the designated member of SLT, monitors attendance for the whole year group. They are responsible for ensuring that their year group meets or exceeds the school attendance target. The head of year/AO (or a member of staff directed by the HOY) will contact parents/carers where attendance falls below 95%, which may result in a meeting in school to devise an attendance strategy.
- The head of year is responsible for monitoring punctuality and for setting lunch-time/breaktime detention for any student who attends school late (after the start of the tutorial session at 8:40 am). As with attendance issues, this may result in an invitation to parents/carers to attend a meeting at school to support student punctuality.
- The AO will meet with all students whose attendance is below 90% or whose attendance gives cause for concern, to devise an attendance strategy, under the direction of the head of year. The AO will also contact all parents/carers of students whose attendance is below 90% to attend a meeting at school to support student attendance, again under the direction of the head of year. The AO monitors student attendance and if it continues to fall, will refer to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) for further action/investigation and will liaise with the Education Investigation Service (EIS) for potential prosecution.
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The Education Investigation Service (EIS)

The school will refer a student to the EWO/EIS if:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20595/behaviour_and_attendance/490/education_investigation_service

- A student's attendance declines below 90% unless appropriate medical evidence is provided to excuse absence
- A student's attendance declines rapidly and there is little evidence of parental/carer engagement.
- A student's attendance declines rapidly and parents/carers refuse to accept their responsibility for ensuring that their son/daughter attends the school every day and on time
- Parents/Carers condone their son/daughter's absence or truancy

- Parents/Carers remove their son/daughter from school for unauthorised absence – including for family holidays.

After negotiation with the school, a request for a penalty notice to be issued to a parent/carer may be made to the local authority. The Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days. The local authority's code of conduct states that 'The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in cases of;

- An excluded child is found in a public place during the school hours of the first five days of exclusion
- Overt truancy is detected (including being caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally condoned absence is evidenced
- Unauthorised leave of absence has been taken (unauthorised family holidays)
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

The use of a Penalty Notice allows a parent/carer to discharge their liability for an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 by the payment of a fine. If the fine remains unpaid at the end of the 28 day payment period, the matter will automatically proceed to court for prosecution of the original offence unless the notice is withdrawn and the parent/carer will be notified in writing.

- Begin court proceedings when the school and EWO have exhausted all possible strategies
- It is hoped that the working partnership between the school, the parent/carer and the student will lead to positive outcomes with regard to any attendance and/or punctuality issues and avoid the need to begin legal proceedings. However, it should be noted, that if there is not an appropriate improvement in attendance and that if recourse has to be taken to legal action, this may result in a parental/carer fine of up to £2,500, a community order or, in extreme cases, a jail sentence of up to three months. If the court thinks it will help to stop your child missing school. The court may also impose a Parenting Order. Please see the following website for further details:
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/schoolslearninganddevelopment/yourchildswelfareat/school/dg_066966

Support for Attendance Issues

The school seeks to be proactive when dealing with attendance issues. We aim to provide high quality teaching and learning, curriculum flexibility, mentoring and multi-agency working. If a student's absence gives cause for concern, the head of year/AO will, where appropriate, instigate a support package, which may include some or all of the following:

- A clear focus on the core subjects
- Close liaison with the students' form tutor and subject teachers
- Mentoring
- Use of peer support to assist with the student's social reintegration
- Attendance at alternative educational courses/projects
- Use of taster sessions/extended work experience to re-motivate
- Referral for a one to one interview with the school's careers advisor
- Liaison with appropriate external agencies
- Continuous liaison and communication with parents/carers
- Referral for Early Help support through Worcestershire County Council

- Alternative Provision and/or Managed Move

Rewards

We have a variety of rewards for attendance and punctuality. Please refer to our 'Behaviour Policy protocols. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure students with medical conditions are not disadvantaged.

Parental/Carer support

We ask that parents/carers support us by:

- not letting their son/daughter(s) take time off school for minor ailments.
- arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays.
- not taking holidays during term time.
- ensuring that their son/daughter attends punctually by no later than 08:40am every day.
- ringing or emailing by 9:00am on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the student will return (we have a dedicated section of our phone line for this purpose). We ask that this procedure is repeated for any subsequent days' absence.
- sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on the student's return to school after an illness (this is a legal requirement).
- keeping us informed by telephone or letter on every subsequent day of absence after the first day.
- letting us know if there is any on-going medical reason that prevents their son/daughter attending school.

School Responsibilities

We will:

- follow up all first day unexplained absences by phone calls/ email / text as soon as possible.
- continue to monitor the absence of a student who does not subsequently return to school as indicated with no explanation.
- remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via letters newsletters and the school website.
- publish students' attendance rate as part of their school reports.
- inform parents/carers if we have concerns regarding a student's attendance.
- challenge regular lateness.
- refer any serious attendance concerns to the EIS/EWO.
- in extreme cases, work with the appropriate authorities and exercise all possible powers we have to enforce attendance.
- inform the local authority and discuss arrangements for the education of students who are likely to be absent for 15 days or more.
- communicate with the local authority and alternative education providers to support students with medical needs

Appendix A

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

- Approve this attendance policy and any subsequent changes.
- Receive attendance reports from the Headteacher
- Review the working of this policy in the light of the headteacher's reports.
- Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school and is known to parents.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- Set attendance targets as part of the development plan and target setting process.
- Monitor progress.
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school.
- Determine, in collaboration with other senior staff, whether to authorise any proposed absences requested.
- Notify parents as appropriate that failure to attend regularly by a student of compulsory age could lead to legal prosecution of the parents.
- Initiate strategies to improve attendance.
- Make a regular report to Governors.

Responsibilities of designated member of Senior Leadership Team

- Monitor attendance of all year group (and groups of students within year groups) on a weekly basis
- Monitor Year Team interventions for poor attendance on a weekly basis
- Monitor the interventions of the Attendance Officer and Educational Investigation Service
- Provide a summary of attendance patterns
- Advise the headteacher on progress towards set targets.
- Advise the headteacher on possible further improvements to the attendance monitoring.

Responsibilities of the Heads of Year

- Monitor [with the AO] attendance of year group (and groups of students within year group) on a weekly basis.
- Initiate interventions for poor attendance on a weekly basis.
- Conduct meetings with parents/carers whose sons/daughters have poor or erratic attendance.
- Direct Educational Investigation Service to take actions as appropriate.
- Make periodic checks of the registers to monitor student absence.
- Make regular checks of absence notes and ensure staff follow up unaccounted for absences.
- Arrange appropriate training for staff and deal with issues of inadequate registering.

Responsibilities of the Attendance Officer

- Monitor attendance of all year groups (and groups of students within year groups) on a weekly basis

- Initiate interventions for poor attendance on a weekly basis
- Conduct meetings with parents/carers whose sons/daughters have poor or erratic attendance.
- Conduct home visits [in conjunction with the EWO] with parents/carers whose sons/daughters have poor or erratic attendance.
- Liaise with the year teams and take actions as directed
- Prepare prosecution evidence for the Educational Investigation Service as required

Responsibilities of Form Tutors

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Ensure that students produce absence authorisation notes.
- Follow up cases of unauthorised absence.
- Inform year team of suspected truancy.
- Advise the head of year of any underlying problems that may account for absence.

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff

- To take a register of attendance for each lesson.
- Inform the attendance officer of suspected truancy.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- Support their son(s)/daughter(s) to attend regularly.
- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Supply an explanatory letter on the day of return.
- Make a request for leave of absence following the school guidelines.
- Support their son(s)/daughter(s) to catch-up on any work missed due to absence.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance.