



ATTENDANCE POLICY

In Brief

Bournemouth School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community (students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors) have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play.

1. PRINCIPLES

- 1.1** All students should aim to avoid any absence from school
- 1.2** Parents/carers should be discouraged from removing their child from school for annual holidays except in the most exceptional of circumstances and even then only when having first received specific school permission for the absence.
- 1.3** All absences from school must be accounted for.
- 1.4** Any unaccountable absences ('unauthorised absences') must be regarded as a breach of School discipline and will be so treated. Repeated unauthorised absences will be regarded as a serious breach of School discipline.
- 1.5** The School curriculum and lesson plans will be so organised as to encourage pupils to attend purposeful, informative and interesting lessons and activities.
- 1.6** The School Attendance Policy, and reports based upon it, will at all times conform to DfE Regulations currently in force.

2. SCHOOLS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Bournemouth School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.

2.2 Attendance Leader

A member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Deputy Headteacher, will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available and relevant issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team. Parents will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance and a report prepared for the governing body. The Deputy Headteacher will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration (refer to Annex 1 for full procedures)

- i. The school marks the attendance register accurately twice each day; once at the start of the day between 8.15 and 8.25 and once during the afternoon session between 12.25 and 12.45 for Years 9-13 and between 13.20 and 13.40 for Years 7 and 8. Tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers and the Pastoral team will ensure the correct codes are in place.
- ii. The registers will close at **8.25am, 12.45pm (Years 9-13) and 13.40pm (Years 7 and 8)**. Any student who arrives **after** the closing of the register will need to sign in the Late book at Reception or, if in the sixth form, swipe in using the machine in reception. Students who arrive late without good reason will be punished as appropriate. For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building and therefore **it is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure**.
- iii. For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day also report to reception and sign in the Signing in and out book. Sixth form students should swipe out using the machine in reception.

2.4 Categorising absence

- i. A mark will be made in respect of each student during registration. Any student who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence **unless** leave has been granted by the school **in advance** or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended. The decision about whether any absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school.
- ii. Bournemouth School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a child's education and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable. If absence is frequent or continuous, pastoral staff will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example;
 - a student is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;
 - a student is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered;
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a term-time leave of absence for which the parents have sought permission in advance.
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the student is too ill to attend;
- (c) where the student has a medical appointment (although parents are encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong;
- (f) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

iii. Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the student is staying at home to look after the house
- the student is shopping during school hours
- the student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission
- the student has taken study leave where no study leave has been granted

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check their attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Class registers

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness.

2.7 Staff Training

The designated member of the SLT will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.1 The Pastoral Team will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body as appropriate.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group, tutor group, at subject level and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

4. SYSTEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING AND IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

4.1 Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 Responses to absence

Unauthorised absences

Registers are checked for accuracy each morning and all messages received are inputted into SIMs. Once this is completed an email is sent to the parents of all students who have an unauthorised absence. This is designed to prompt parents to inform the school of the reason why their child is absent, or to alert the school to any potential issues.

If a student's absence remains unauthorised for three or more days, the school will contact home to establish the reason behind the absence and offer support as necessary. This period will be reduced if there is a safeguarding concern.

First Day Calling

Bournemouth School has in place a system of first-day calling the parents of students identified as vulnerable. The parents of such a student will be telephoned on the first day a student is absent without explanation by the Pastoral Team to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage, students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. The attendance of these students will

be monitored at least daily and in some cases attendance at every lesson will be checked.

4.3 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. The school may decide to implement an attendance contract designed to improve a student's attendance.

4.4 Reintegration Support

The School will always encourage students to return to school as soon as they are fit to do so. In exceptional circumstances the School may decide to reintegrate a student on a part time basis. This will only be temporary and with a view to returning the student to full time education as soon as possible. Where appropriate the School may use strategies involving the school nurse, pupil or staff mentors to aid reintegration. Work may be set on MS Teams to enable students to access remote education as part of their reintegration plan. Where ongoing health issues prevent attendance to school, the School will follow the procedures set out in the following policies:

- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions
- Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School

5. TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS

5.1 Recent changes to the law give no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. The Department for Education (DfE) have stated that Head teachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

5.2 Bournemouth School and the Local Authority may issue warnings and Fixed Penalty Notices under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (amended regulations 2013). This is an alternative to the prosecution of parents/carers/guardians for failing to ensure the regular attendance of a compulsory school age student where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

5.3 Further advice and guidance on this matter can be located through the DfE website entitled 'Advice on school attendance'.

5.4 Each request for authorised absence will be considered on its merits; exceptional circumstances might include the following:

- a parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;
- there has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned cope more effectively with the situation.

5.5 The financial factor – when a parent claims that he/she is unable to afford to book a holiday during the school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term-time – will not be taken as constituting an “exceptional circumstance”.

5.6 Similarly, the nature of the proposed holiday – whether, for example, it is a fortnight visiting Rome or a fortnight in a caravan at the seaside – will not be taken as constituting an “exceptional circumstance”.

5.7 We will not grant leave, even in exceptional circumstances, if:

- a student's attendance record over the previous 20 week period is less than 95% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness; or

- the period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to, or coincides with, tests, exams or other significant events in the school calendar;
- a period of leave has already been granted that academic year.

5.8 Application for Leave of Absence should be made by letter to the Headmaster in advance of any booking and other than in the most exceptional circumstances, the request for leave should be made **at least 4 weeks** in advance of the proposed leave date, and before entering into any travel commitment.

6. PARENTS' / CARERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Under section 7 of the 1996 Education Act the prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers.

6.2 Bournemouth School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- **not** expect the school to automatically agree to any requests for absence, and **not** condone unjustified absence from school

6.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify school on the first day of absence either by phone or e-mail (office@bournemouth-school.org);
- Where requested by the school provide medical evidence for longer term or persistent absences.

7. STUDENTS RESPONSIBILITY

7.1 All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their form tutor.

7.2 Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their form tutor a note from their parents to explain the absence. Students also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

7.3 If a student has an unauthorised absence they are expected to see their subject teachers to identify any work missed and submit that work on or before an arranged deadline.

8. GOVERNORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 The Governing Body shall ensure that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and good attendance of children who are students at the school.

8.2 This policy will be reviewed within the Governing Body cycle of policy reviews.

9. REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Authority
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Authority
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days exceed agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendance
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendance
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

Annex 1

REGISTRATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The following applies to all year groups

Rationale

We believe that it is a fundamental requirement to a student's success at Bournemouth School that he/she should attend regularly. Where, through ill-health or other unavoidable reason, this is not possible, he must be supported in his efforts to keep up with the work he missed and helped to re-join the rest of his class as quickly as possible. For these reasons the school has a coherent policy on attendance.

Principles

- Every student should aim to avoid any absence from school.
- Parents should be discouraged from removing students from school for annual holidays except when unavoidable, having first received specific school permission for the absence.
- All absences from school must be accounted for.
- Any unaccountable absences ('illegal absences') must be regarded as a serious breach of School discipline and will be so treated.
- The School Attendance Policy, and Reports based upon it, will at all times conform to DFE Regulations currently in force.

Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for School Attendance is delegated to the Deputy Headteacher.

Day to day administration of the Attendance Policy shared between the form tutors and the office staff.

Procedures

- Registration occurs twice daily, at 8.20am, and at 12.25pm (Years 9-13) or 13.20 (Years 7 & 8).
- Register trays will be collected from the foyer just before registration times. Attendance will be marked electronically in SIMS whenever possible.
- Tutors get as many explanations as possible directly from students. Put notes into register trays. Tutors should forward any email correspondence relating to attendance to office@bournemouth-school.org. Tutors should adjust SIMS to reflect any telephone conversations relating to attendance by coding the absence using the above list. Any conversation involving multiple days or extended absence should be recorded in an email to office@bournemouth-school.org.
- Tutors will require notes to cover any absence from school, other than for an organised school visit. These notes will form the evidence to support the encoding of the pupil's absence record. The notes will be selectively filed.
- Any student arriving after the registers have been returned to the trolleys, must register at reception.

Special Arrangements:

- Absence of more than one week may require a medical certificate.
- For protracted absence, unless covered by a doctor's note, referral is to be made via the HoH.
- For medical exemption from PE, notes for sustained periods must be from a doctor.
- HoH should liaise with Home and Support services for students with sustained attendance problems.

The privilege of not attending morning registration may be granted to Sixth Form students by the Head of Sixth Form, within the constraints of the Sixth Form Handbook. This privilege may be withdrawn if lesson attendance becomes inadequate.

The Form Tutor should notify the HoH of patterns of absence, e.g. each Monday and significant levels of absence. Similarly the office staff will also notify HoH of such absences.

All requests for term time absences must be approved by the Headmaster (refer to Attendance Policy).

Absence through illness during the school day

First Aid staff will decide whether a student presenting as unwell should be sent home. If this is the case, then the Head of House and Form Tutor will be informed. A student will only be sent home if parent is at home and can collect. A record of students reporting sick whether sent home or not will be kept.

Registration Procedure when students are involved in School Visits:

a) Principles:

In line with Attendance Policy, it is essential that at all times students are accounted for. It is important that information on students on School Visits, Trips, Away Fixtures, etc is always clearly available to the School Office in case of Fire or other emergency. Students taking part in authorised School activities must be accurately encoded on the Registers.

b) Procedures:

Staff organising visits or taking students out of School:

- Always follow the prescribed procedures to ensure all visits etc. are authorised and insured.
- Always ensure that at the time of departure an accurate list of students being taken out of School is handed in at reception, properly dated and containing the necessary identifiers (e.g. Activity, student's names and registration forms).

Staff registering Teaching Groups

- In accordance with the general policy, only register as present those students actually **present**.
- Students not attending the lesson must be registered as **absent**.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.