

## Attendance Policy

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Bishopshalt is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- 1.2. Good attendance and punctuality at school helps to facilitate a good education. It enhances career prospects and minimises the risks of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming the victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse.
- 1.3. Regular attendance enhances pupils' social skills.

### **2. Aims**

- 2.1 To develop and implement an effective attendance policy that touches all aspects of the School's life, and relates directly to the School's values, ethos and curriculum.
  - to encourage all pupils to reach their true potential and eventually become independent learners who value learning with and from others i.e. have a positive attitude to life long learning
  - to value application, perseverance, initiative and independence of thought and action, as well as cooperation and endeavour
- 2.2 This attendance policy and its implementation will encourage pupils to attend school more regularly by its implementation of specific measures, e.g.
  - registering pupils accurately and efficiently
  - setting attendance targets for individual pupils and year groups
  - contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised
  - regularly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality
  - reporting school attendance statistics to parents, the London Borough of Hillingdon and the DFE as appropriate.
- 2.3 To reinforce good attendance and to encourage improved attendance by using such measures as:
  - informal comments from pastoral and subject staff
  - by the more formal issue of attendance certificates in tutor time and assemblies
- 2.4 To monitor and evaluate this policy and its implementation by, amongst other means, rigorously collecting and analysing data about attendance to check progress against measurable outcomes.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Parents/Carers–**

- All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary statutory responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.
- In addition to statutory obligations parents all sign in the Pupil Contact Book, which contains the 'Home School Agreement'
- To work in partnership with Bishopshalt School and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing school about significant changes or influences in the child's life which may impact on attendance and learning.

### **3.2 Bishopshalt School –**

- We will provide an education suitable for the child's needs
- We will provide a welcoming and safe environment which encourages full attendance and promotes the full potential of the child
- We will keep accurate and up to date records on children's attendance and punctuality as required by legislation
- We will report our attendance figures on a regular basis as required to the London Borough of Hillingdon and DFE
- We will use "Keep Kids Safe" an automated system that informs parents of a child's absence. There will be the 'First Day' contact in the event of absence without reason.

### **3.3 The Participation Team –**

- Ensure their work is clearly targeted with a staged approach to support children, parents and the school in relation to improving attendance
- To consult with the school and to establish good working practice based on clear expectations
- To become the lead agency when instigating a 'Attendance Panel' approach to legal proceedings if after advice and intervention between the parents, child and school has failed to improve poor attendance.
- The 'Attendance Panel' is chaired by the Participation Officer, The Year Tutor, and/or the Deputy Head Pastoral, the pupil and their parents/carers. If appropriate, Connexions, School Nurse, Social

Services and Safer Schools Police Officer may also be invited. The attendance concerns are shared and a contract is drawn up to help improve the situation. The Panel meets to review the situation, usually 4-6 weeks after the initial meeting. If an improvement is made, the Participation Officer will send a letter of congratulations. If no improvement is seen, the Participation Officer will usually issue a penalty notice (£60 rising to £120 per parent per child). If this is not paid, or there is a further decline in attendance/punctuality then the Participation Officer may refer the matter to the Borough Legal Department to consider prosecution.

### **3.4 The Pupil –**

- Pupils are responsible for making sure that their own punctual and regular attendance is maintained at the highest level
- When pupils return to school following an absence, they should give their form tutor a note from their parent explaining the reason for their absence
- Pupils are responsible for signing in the late book, which is situated in the Pupils' Office, should they arrive late for registration
- Pupils who experience difficulty which may prevent them from regular attendance should speak initially to their Form Tutor

### **4. Morning & Afternoon Registration -**

- Morning Registration is from 8:40am to 9:00am
- There is a warning bell at 8:35am and a 'late bell' at 8:40am
- Afternoon registration takes place during lesson 4
- There is a bell at 1:10pm to signal the end of lunch and a bell at 1:15pm to signal the start of lesson 4

### **5. Unauthorised Lateness -**

- Any pupil arriving at school after the beginning of registration is required to sign in late at the Pupils' Office
- Any pupil arriving at school after the registers have closed at 10 :00am will be given a U mark on their attendance, unless a letter from a parent or carer is received explaining an authorised reason for their lateness or a medical appointment card is shown

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- Year Tutors will monitor lateness and send letters to parents/carers where appropriate
- If punctuality does not improve the Participation Officer will be informed.

## 6. **First Day Absence** -

- The school operates “Keep Kids Safe”. This is an automated system that informs parents of a child’s absence from school. Parents are required to call the school to report any absence. If a call is not received before the registers close, the absence is then followed up by Keep Kids Safe.

## 7. **Attendance Concerns** -

- The school target for attendance is 96%, within an academic year.
- Year Tutors will monitor attendance and send letters to parents/carers expressing concern over attendance where appropriate
- If attendance does not improve the Participation Officer will be informed.

## 8. **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)** –

- A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parent’s fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.
- All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
- PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic monitoring where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include; allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Participation Team.

## 9. Exceptional Leave -

- It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- All Hillingdon schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional leave.
- Any requests to take a pupil out of school for **exceptional leave** during term time must be submitted in writing to the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher will write to the parent and remind them that the school calendar is published well in advance in order to avoid any confusion about holiday dates. Leave of absence during school time will necessarily lead to missed lessons and disruption to the pattern and routine of the term. Missing lessons is harmful to the education of your child and should be avoided at all costs. Leave of absence during term time is therefore actively discouraged and frowned upon.
- Exceptional leave may be refused when a students' attendance is less than 96%.
- Exceptional leave may be refused when the school is aware of truancy.
- Exceptional leave may be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
- Reasons for Exceptional leave will be logged on the student's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.
- The Participation Team can issue Penalty Notices (£60 rising to £120 per parent per child) for any unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices will be given for the first occasion only, subsequent unauthorised leave would result in a summons to the magistrates court.

## 10. Truancy -

- Any truancy is referred to the Year Tutor and Deputy Head Pastoral
- Parents will be informed and the pupil will normally be required to serve an internal exclusion.

### 11. Every Child Matters -

- This policy follows the guidelines of the London Borough of Hillingdon Participation Team and the Department for Education and Skills document “Every Child Matters”. The “Every Child Matters” document highlights five key areas for the well-being of children:
  1. Be Healthy
  2. Stay Safe
  3. Enjoy and Achieve
  4. Make a Positive Contribution
  5. Achieve Economic Well-Being
  
- By promoting good attendance and punctuality, Bishopshalt School believes that we are encouraging and protecting students under these five key areas and that this can only be achieved through good attendance at school.