



Main School Attendance Policy

Approved March 2018

All school policies are reviewed by Governors annually

Scope of Policy: This policy applies to all students at Bournside and will be used to inform attendance practice within the school.

Key Requirements/ Legal Duties

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens - either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. As a last resort, schools and local authorities have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

Bournside seeks to operate in ways which maximise student potential while supporting parents/carers in meeting their legal requirements.

Bournside fulfils its responsibilities in respect of taking a morning and afternoon session registration, of being open for the required 190 student school days unless prevented by extreme weather or other unforeseen exceptional circumstance, and by using the nationally recognised attendance codes.

Key principles

- Students at Bournside have the right to the best possible education.
- In order for students to access the best possible education, a high level of attendance is essential.
- Students' ability to stay and feel safe, enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution may be jeopardised by poor attendance.

Context

Bournside endeavours to provide a safe learning environment in which students can feel and be safe, enjoy and achieve. Bournside acknowledges the proven correlation between high level attendance and student outcomes. Bournside's attendance policy emphasises positive strategies and a range of interventions to ensure the highest levels of attendance. However, when normal school procedures do not result in good attendance, a range of further measures, including legal action, have to be considered.

Aims of the policy

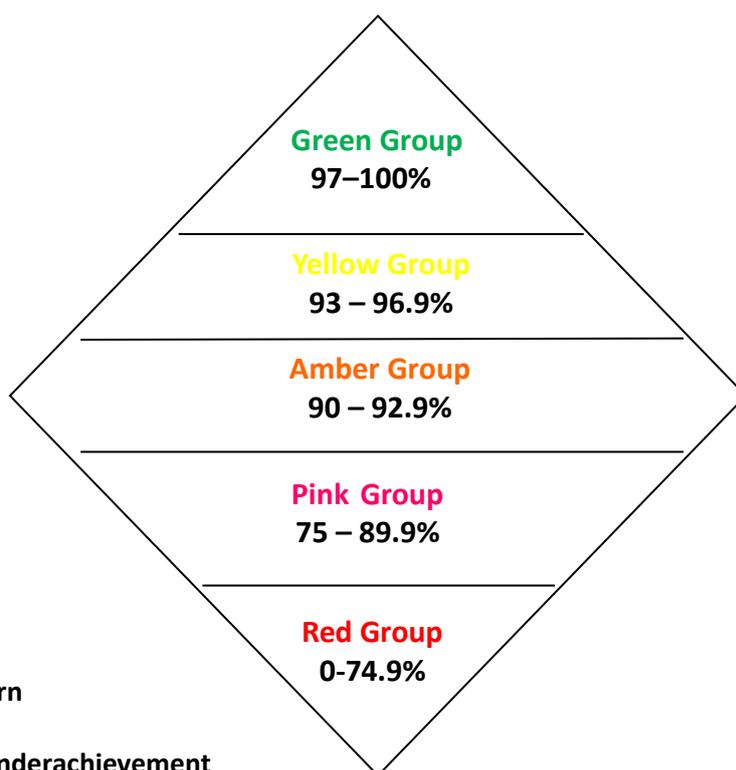
- For all students to achieve 100% attendance
- To raise the profile of the importance of a high level of attendance among students, parents/carers and staff.
- To outline a procedure for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies.

- To eradicate persistent lateness and promote punctuality.
- To explain the legal processes for persistent lateness and absence.

Attendance practice

Improving attendance is a whole school initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.

The diagram below highlights the whole school approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. This is led by the Deputy Headteacher who works with his/her team to monitor and improve attendance, while raising the profile and emphasising the importance of attendance at individual and whole school level.



Green: No Concern

Yellow: Concern

Amber: Risk of Underachievement

Pink: Severe Risk of Underachievement

Red: Extreme Concern

Positive reinforcement

In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement, Bournside uses a range of rewards and positive reinforcement strategies. As appropriate to student age these include:

- Display of individual attendance
- Display of tutor/class attendance
- Certificates
- Praise postcards
- Mention in assemblies
- Reinforcement through small prizes
- Inclusion in prize draws
- Special awards

Attendance monitoring and intervention

As evident from the attendance diamond, Bournside has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in respect of attendance concern. In summary these are as follows:

- The attendance statistics for every student at Bournside will be displayed at least fortnightly by the Heads of Year and tutors in Head of Year (HoY) offices and tutor rooms
- Good attendance will continue to receive positive reinforcement in assemblies
- Green and Yellow - The tutor has responsibility for praising students in the Green group for high attendance and encouraging and supporting improvement for students in the Yellow group through monitoring, dialogue with the student and recognising improvement
- Amber - The PILs work with tutors and parents/carers to improve the attendance of the students in the amber group
- Pink – The HoY, Attendance Officer, PILs and the Education Performance and Inclusion Team (EPI Team) works with parents/carers to improve the attendance of the students in the pink group
- Red – The HoY, Attendance Officer, PILs and the EPI Team works with parents/carers to improve the attendance of the students in the red group. This includes initiating legal action when required

To support this process, the HoY, their PIL and the Attendance Officer hold regular, fortnightly attendance meetings for each year group in which all students are monitored and banded in relation to their attendance percentage. In these routine meetings the attendance of students whose attendance is in the red, pink or amber groups and those whose attendance is declining will be reviewed. A series of actions to support improvement will be agreed, delegated and recorded.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

If a student is absent from Bournside, it is vital that a parent or carer contacts Bournside at the earliest opportunity to provide a sufficient reason for absence. This should be by telephone in the first instance, supported by written communication on the student's return to school.

Absence can only be authorised when there is good cause. If no sufficient reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents/carers cannot authorise absence. This is a decision which rests with Bournside in accordance with the boundaries set by The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996. When deemed necessary, Bournside reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness.

Lateness

It is Bournside's responsibility to provide the best education possible. This can only be achieved if students attend regularly and punctually. Bournside expects all students to arrive at school, registrations and lessons on time. A student is deemed late if they arrive at school after 8.50 am. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. A student arriving late will disrupt not only their own continuity of learning but also that of others. Lateness to school or lessons will result in short detentions. An increase in lateness or patterns of lateness over a period of time will result in further follow up investigation and action, which will include further sanctions. Persistent lateness may result in a penalty notice.

Avoiding holidays and appointments during term time

In order to maximise individual achievement, parents or carers should avoid making routine appointments for students during the school day or taking family holidays during the term time period. **Holidays will not be authorised during term time, and for students of a compulsory school age unauthorised holidays may result in a penalty notice. Warning letters relating to unauthorised absence for holidays, will not be issued.**

Compassionate Leave

A parent or carer wishing to apply for compassionate leave for a student should apply in writing to the Headteacher.

Legal action

All parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends Bournside on a regular and punctual basis. Should any student's attendance or punctuality become a concern, they will be subject to an Education Welfare investigation. When necessary, Bournside's Attendance Officer will recommend legal action. Bournside, the EPI Team and the Local Authority work together in partnership when legal action is required.

Legal action includes:

- **Penalty Notice:** A penalty notice may be issued to each parent per student who has unauthorised absence or lateness. The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 42 day period, a prosecution will be sought.
- **Prosecution for unauthorised absence:** It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at Bournside. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. This can result in a criminal record.

Supporting and working with parents/carers

In order to support parents/carers in meeting their legal requirements and to maximise individual student attendance, Bournside seeks to keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and to actively involve parents/carers on attendance issues. Methods include:

- Unexplained/unaccounted for absences - phone call or letter asking for reasons
- Letters generated below 97% - first and second warning letters
- Parental meetings
- Active involvement by pastoral staff and Attendance Officer
- Attendance information included on student reports
- Opportunity to talk to HoY and Support Department at Parent and Teacher Consultation Evenings.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Working in collaboration with School Leadership Team, the Deputy Headteacher will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy, review it annually and submit a report to the Governors. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout Bournside.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- receive reports from the Deputy Headteacher
- review the working of the policy in the light of the Deputy Headteacher's report
- ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the School and is known by the parents/carers.

The Headteacher will:

- receive reports from the Deputy Headteacher in the Headteacher's Report to Governors
- review the working of the policy in the light of the Deputy Headteacher's report

- ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the School and is known by the parents/carers
- determine (in collaboration with relevant senior staff) whether to authorise any proposed compassionate leave absences requested in writing, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made.

The Deputy Headteacher will:

- set attendance targets as part of the School Pastoral Review Plan
- monitor progress of attendance targets
- ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school
- notify parents/carers as appropriate that if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents/carers commit an offence
- initiate appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance
- arrange appropriate training for staff
- deal with issues of inadequate registering
- liaise with the appropriate bodies (including the Local Authority's agencies) over persistent absentees
- liaise with the Local Authority agencies and police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to the school
- make regular reports with statistics to the Headteacher and Governing Body through the Headteacher's Report to Governors.

The Heads of Year will:

- reward good attendance
- oversee the attendance arrangements for their year group
- work with all attendance staff to ensure the efficient running of the system
- make periodic checks of the registers to monitor student absence
- make regular checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence
- ensure that unaccounted-for absences are followed up by getting in touch with parents/carers (if there is reasonable concern about a child's welfare, the Head of Year will decide what action to take including informing the relevant local authority agency)
- contact parents/carers over student absence patterns where appropriate
- initiate the Attendance Improvement Process in collaboration with the EPI Team
- keep the Deputy Headteacher informed of the effectiveness of the policies
- advise the Deputy Headteacher on any strategies which could be initiated or improved
- ensure that tutors have access to attendance data/ statistics
- oversee the training of tutors in attendance data/statistics and policy
- liaise with PILs and Attendance Officer to ensure that offsite providers are communicated with in regard to student attendance.

The Attendance Officer will:

- make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with
- contact parents/carers over student absence patterns when appropriate
- meet fortnightly with Heads of Year and PILs to discuss attendance and devise attendance plans for students in Amber, Pink and Red categories
- issue penalty notices and commence prosecution for unauthorised holidays and persistent absence, as directed by the Deputy Headteacher
- make reports to the Deputy Headteacher on the efficiency of the system
- liaise with the Deputy Headteacher over training needs
- inform the Deputy Headteacher of reasons for student absence
- produce attendance data/statistics for the Deputy Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body

- liaise with HoYs and PILs who will visit homes as and when necessary, as directed by the Deputy Headteacher
- alert the Deputy Headteacher to patterns of absence and truancy.

The Pastoral Intervention Leaders will:

- reward good attendance
- input/check daily attendance figures
- contact parents/carers on the student's first day of absence after registration has closed updating the system throughout the day
- ensure that all student absences are noted and absence notifications received from parents/carers
- monitor and support students in the Amber, Pink and Red groups, implementing attendance plans where appropriate
- contact parents/carers to advise them of internal truancy where appropriate
- make home visits where appropriate to deal with attendance and safeguarding concerns
- participate in the Attendance Improvement Process in collaboration with the EPI Team
- liaise with the EPI Team on behalf of the school over potential prosecutions for poor attendance
- pass on child protection concerns raised through the Attendance Improvement process to the appropriate bodies
- co-ordinate intervention strategies for students with attendance below 90%

Tutors will:

- reward good attendance
- monitor and support students in the Green and Yellow Group
- ensure that students are registered accurately
- ensure that students provide explanations for their absences and pass these to the Head of Year/ PIL
- identify patterns of absence which may be significant
- display fortnightly attendance of their tutor groups
- encourage and praise students with good attendance records
- keep the Head of Year/PIL informed of any signs of suspected truancy and inform them of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences
- check the attendance of students at their lessons according to the school system

Parent/carers are required to:

- ensure their children attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session)
- inform the school of their child's absence on the first day of non-attendance or as soon as possible thereafter
- communicate further with school if their child's absence is longer than one day
- respond to any requests for information from school regarding their child's absence
- not take holidays in term time
- make any request for compassionate leave in writing to the Headteacher.

Students are required to:

- attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session)
- if they have been absent ensure that their absence is explained by their parents/carers on the day of return to the school
- sign in if late for the school day
- attend all lessons and be in the correct place specified on their timetable

Taking the Register

Registration is carried out at the beginning and end of each day, using the Electronic Register. Registers are marked using a set code so that reasons for absence can be quickly established. A high standard of marking is regarded as essential. Staff are regularly given updated instructions on the marking of registers.

Class teachers are required to take a register within the first ten minutes of each lesson, using SIMS. A pattern of attendance for the day can be seen clearly by all staff in every session.

Students must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of this school to register ALL students every session. In addition, all teaching staff must check that the students timetabled to be in their lessons are present for each session. The register must record whether the student is present, absent, or attending an approved educational activity.

An 'approved off-site educational activity' is defined as:

- one taking place off the school premises
- approved by a person authorised by the Headteacher
- supervised by a person approved by the Headteacher
- of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits

When a student of compulsory school age is absent it must be marked as an 'authorised' or 'unauthorised' absence using the appropriate code.