



Attendance Policy (Students)

Review Date: April 2026

Review by: Senior Leadership Team

Final Approval: Pastoral, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Governors

Academy Context

The core values which relate specifically to this policy, state that we are working together to form relationships based on:

Responsibility – everyone is expected to understand the consequences of their actions

Truth – everyone is expected to be honest and to communicate in a positive manner

Justice – everyone is entitled to be treated fairly and to promote the self-esteem of others.

Compassion – everyone is encouraged to be generous in their concern for others

Such values contribute to our common purpose of striving for high quality education with a strong Christian ethos and govern the policy and processes for ensuring high attendance.

Data Protection

Any personal data processed in the delivery of this policy will be processed in accordance with the Academy's Data Protection Policy.

Introduction

In line with national expectation, Bishop Stopford School encourages every student to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance in order to benefit fully from the education provided for them.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a student is legally required to attend regularly at the Academy where they are a registered student.

The Academy is legally required to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with

- Child Protection Policy
- The Schools Attendance page on the Northamptonshire County Council Website (for information regarding Penalty Notices)
- The DfE's updated guidance on Attendance (2024): [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

Policy

The Academy will:

- Proactively manage attendance to ensure it is at the highest possible level
- Ensure all legal obligations with regard to attendance are met, including statutory reporting of in-term absences to the Local Authority;
- Promote the importance of good attendance through communication with parents and students and celebrate high attendance levels;
- Monitor and respond to every case of Persistent Absence (ie attendance below 90%).
- Liaise with the relevant external agencies regarding Persistent Absence;
- Maintain accurate records and other information (eg action planning) in relation to absence;

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- Monitor and review absence through the Governors' PSW Committee.

Roles and Responsibilities

Maintaining attendance at Bishop Stopford School is the responsibility of everyone in the Academy community.

Students

All students are expected to attend the Academy and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Students who are identified as experiencing attendance difficulties will be supported to improve their attendance by a member of the PSW team.

Parents¹

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends the Academy regularly, punctually, in correct uniform and equipped for learning.
- If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents are requested to notify the Academy on the first day of absence.
- A student's absence from the Academy will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent or if the absence is not authorised by the Academy.
- Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance.
- Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during academy hours.
- Parents must notify the Academy of all absences of their child/ren.

Academy

- Attendance is the responsibility of **all** academy staff.
- The Academy will encourage good attendance and punctuality through role modelling and explicit reference to the importance of good attendance.
- The Academy will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality, and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents.
- The Academy will respond to all absenteeism consistently and take each individual's circumstances into account when devising responses.
- The Academy will remind parents regularly of the legal requirements placed upon them regarding attendance, including the fact that if a student arrives later than the published registration time, and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the student will be recorded as for that session, via the 'U' code.
- All class teachers will take registers in each of their classes and notify the Head of Year as soon as possible of any concerns over absent students.
- All telephone messages, notes or email messages regarding absence/lateness will be recorded and dated.
- Will only consider parental requests for absence when exact dates for absence are given.
- Will actively discourage holidays during term time.
- Will participate in local and national initiatives with regard to attendance
- Will ensure all statutory reporting is made and that the absence system is compliant

The PSW Team has specific responsibility for monitoring attendance. This includes front-line management of attendance processes, referrals to the Education, Inclusion Partnership Team (EIPT) and liaison with parents.

¹ Under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, the term 'Parent' includes:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with a child.

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Appendix One

Procedures

Registration

Session registration will take place during Registration (8.35-8.55) and at the start of period 4 (1.15-1.30). Registers will also be taken for each lesson. If a student does not arrive before the registers close, they will be marked as 'absent'. Students who arrive after registers have closed, register late at Reception. Students' lateness will be tracked and parents notified via Edulink. Persistent lateness will result in further intervention, including sanctions if students have truanted.

Authorised / Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence: the Academy has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

(The following is an illustrative but not exhaustive list of occasions where an absence would be authorised.)

- The student was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- Off-site educational activity (eg music examination)
- Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
- At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Educational visit or trip
- Work experience

Absence is **unauthorised** in all other circumstances, unless the Academy considers it to be *exceptional*. Absence will be deemed to be **unauthorised** for a session if no communication from parents is received and where none of the conditions outlined under authorised absences apply. Educational, Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIPT) advice will be sought where there is any doubt about categorising an absence as authorised or unauthorised.

The following is an illustrative but not exhaustive list of occasions where absence would be unauthorised.

- no explanation is forthcoming; the academy is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the student stays at home to look after siblings or a parent
- the student is shopping during academy hours
- birthdays or other special occasions

1. Request for Absence – eg Holiday, Music Exam, Medical appointment

There are two methods of communication which should be used for all requests:

Email: studentabsence@bishopstopford.com or write to the school via the 'Absence' tab of Edulink.

2. Emergency Absence – eg Illness, Reporting late

There are two methods of communication which should be used for all emergency absence:

- Telephone: 01536 503503, Option 1 – Dedicated voicemail for absences.
- Edulink: contact the school with details of the absence via Edulink

If a student is late to school for any reason, they must sign in at the Octagon (main reception).

Procedures for following up absence

- If a student is absent without an explanation being received, the PSW Team will contact the parents wherever possible, on the first day of absence. If the absentee is a student about whom there are already concerns, the PSW Team will determine the best point of contact (parents, Social Services) and follow up as a priority.

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- Students will be recorded as having 'unauthorised absence' for any session where an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming.
- If a student is persistently [or intermittently] absent, the Head of Year will send letters to notify parents and set up a meeting if there is no improvement. At this point, an Attendance Contract will be initiated and parents will be informed that persistent absence puts them at risk of a Penalty Notice. Where appropriate, an offer of an EHA will also be extended.
- If a student is persistently absent [or late] and the academy's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the EIPT.

Managing Persistent Absence (PA)

- All PA (ie below 90%) will be identified, monitored and individual action plans instigated when appropriate.
- Meetings with parents will be held with the Head of Year or another member of the PSW Team to develop, monitor, review and evaluate support plans.
- Where appropriate, PA will be referred to the EIPT and this will be a standing agenda item in link meetings with the EIPT.

Child Missing In Education (CME)

- Where a student is identified as potentially Missing in Education, a home visit will be carried out by Academy staff and the absence will be referred to the EIPT.

Referrals and Penalty Notices

All unauthorised absences which are referred to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIPT), could result in a Penalty Notice (PN) being issued.

A PN is an alternative to prosecution and requires the parent(s) to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's irregular attendance at school. An initial fixed penalty notice of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days, (per parent) is issued for each child's absence. In Northamptonshire, the Local Authority issues them through the EIPT following notification from a school.:

"The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term)" (Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024)

Further information can be found on the North Northamptonshire website:

[Penalty notices for non-school attendance | North Northamptonshire Council](#)

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Attendance data will be monitored regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy / practice.
- Students whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement. The Head of Year and Head of Key Stage will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be reminded regularly [via newsletters, the Academy's communication, parents' evenings, etc] of the importance of regular attendance.
- Students who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time may, if appropriate and at the advice of professionals, have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into the Academy upon their return.
- The PSW Team will, where appropriate, visit families in their home to support improving attendance.

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- The PSW Team will, when appropriate, liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Visits will be made to feeder Primary Schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible secondary transfer. Discussions with Primary School Teachers will seek to identify those students who may require extra support or have EHAs in place.

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