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 Attendance Policy

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Signed LAB:

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**Aims**

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. Bardwell School aims to maintain attendance levels of 94% or more. Where students have known medical needs which impact on their school attendance, records will be kept on file and meetings will be held with families to ensure their attendance is good. Individual percentages will be identified during the meeting so that all parties can ensure that there is a good balance between ensuring the students medical needs and wellbeing are maintained whilst balancing this with good school attendance.

This policy has been developed in consultation with governors, teachers,
County Attendance Officers, parents and guardians. School attendance is subject to various Education laws and the school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school’s commitment to attendance matters. It outlines the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

**Attendance**

Bardwell School expects good attendance from its students, for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved.

We would ask parents to help the school by notifying us of all absences on the first day. Any absence which is known in advance, e.g., doctors’ appointment, should be notified to the school in writing beforehand. If absence from school is unavoidable, due to special family circumstances, it may be appropriate for the school to provide a home learning pack.

Our school day starts at 9:00. Registers are marked shortly after this in line with safeguarding procedures. Any students who arrive after 9:00 must enter via the main reception and will be marked as late.

**Absence**

All schools must show the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence. This is a government requirement.

**Authorised absence can be:**

* Sickness
* Medical or dental appointments - which cannot be arranged outside school hours.

*It would not be expected that this would take a whole day, but part of a morning or afternoon session.*

* Days of religious observance.
Should an explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

**Unauthorised absence can be:**

* Any absence, which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone.
* Family holiday which is taken in term time
* Staying home due to parents being unwell and/ or unable to transport to school.
* Not sleeping well (where there are medical reasons for disturbed sleep, medical letters will need to be produced).
* Truancy
* Staying at home to look after younger siblings or sick relatives.

**Appointments during school hours**

Please send a copy of the appointment letter into school at least 72 hours ahead of the appointment, if you are unable to provide a letter a screen shot of the text message appointment reminder will also be suitable. Your child will be marked as an unauthorised absence if we do not have confirmation of the appointment.

**Request for holidays in term time**

Holidays during term time are not permitted. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil’s potential achievement. The school may consider authorising absence in very exceptional circumstances, ~~but~~ parents must formally request permission by writing to the headteacher in advance.

If a child is taken out of school for an unauthorised holiday it may be referred to the attendance team and a penalty fine may be imposed.

**Post-16 Attendance**

If a student chooses to stay on to post-16 provision at Bardwell School, then good attendance is essential.

Attendance in ~~sixth form~~ Post-16 will be monitored in the same way as the main school.

**Monitoring attendance**

Attendance is monitored daily. The Pastoral and Safeguarding Manager is responsible for this monitoring.

Teachers will note both authorised and unauthorised absences in the registers and this is followed up by The Pastoral and Safeguarding Manager.

Any concerns that the school believes needs additional support to ensure students maintain excellent attendance, will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher and the school’s County Attendance Officer who has the authority to issue penalty notices or fines.

**Penalty Notices and Legal Action the Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall ensure they receive efficient full- time education suitable-

[a] To their age, ability, and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have,
either by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to students who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning, which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates’ Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

* they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six-week period;
* they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school’s authorisation.
* they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence.
* Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ (PA) when they miss 10% 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 parents’ fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA (persistent absence) mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully by the school. An attendance meeting where family and school professionals discuss the reasons for the absence and create a bespoke plan for the student to improve their attendance will be offered between parent, pupil, and school to try and help resolve any issues.

Following an attendance meeting, if there is lack of engagement from the family and attendance does not improve, the case will be referred to the County Attendance Team, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

**First Day Response**

If a student is absent from school and we have not been informed, either by telephone or letter, a phone call home will be made to establish the reasons for the absence. This will happen on the **first day of your child’s absence from school**.

For students living in the Bicester area, if they have a medical/ dental appointment, we do not expect them to take a full day off school. If they have a slight illness e.g.: headache, stomach ache etc, a date for a likely return to school will be asked for. If the reason given does not warrant an authorised absence, you will be and advised on how to avoid unauthorised absence in the future.

It will also be explained that a major factor in making these calls is to ensure that the student concerned is safe. All phone calls are made with the utmost consideration of the needs and feelings of the recipient and politeness is a primary factor.

If we are unable to make contact by telephone, a letter will be sent via ParentMail requesting an explanation for the absence. Any pattern of regular absentees will be identified, and support will be offered by the school, in finding solutions for raising attendance. Many problems such as bullying, or family difficulties can therefore be detected early, and support given to students and parents to address these issues swiftly.

**Third Day Response**

For safeguarding reasons if we have not heard within three days then we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided to gain an explanation for the absence. If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is then we will make a home visit. However, if we are unable to get a response then we may report it to the police as your child will then be classed a ‘missing child’.

**Pupil Missing from Education**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation after 5 consecutive school days and the school are unable to contact the family must be referred to the LCSS.

LCSS will visit the home three times. If this is unsuccessful, then the police will visit the home. If the pupil cannot be located, a MP1 form must be completed and sent to the Students Missing Education Administrator.

**Remember**

1. Email or ring the school, on the first day of absence. office.7029@bardwell.oxon.sch.uk / 01869 242182

**Teenage Pregnancy Protocol**

• The protocol for supporting teenage pregnancy is available through OCC.

• The County Attendance Officers will ensure that the Protocol is followed, and the appropriate meetings are held and recorded.

**Other relevant policies and key documents:**

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Bardwell School – Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Bardwell School - Behaviour Policy

Children Missing in Education

