



BOTTISHAM VILLAGE COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1. Introduction

At Bottisham Village College we understand the importance of a student's attendance on their progress and emotional wellbeing. We monitor attendance regularly and offer support through our pastoral system for any student who may find attending school a challenge.

Bottisham Village College aims to:

- ensure that every student, irrespective of their background or educational needs, has access to the education to which they are entitled.
- raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school.
- be proactive to address early patterns of absence.
- support students, and their families, so they can achieve an overall attendance of 96% or above. This should give them an advantage over their peers at other schools (national average attendance in secondary schools is lower than this%).
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in high attendance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2. Legal and National Context

The law regarding **regular attendance and punctuality**:

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure that their children receives full-time education; and, that they have a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance and punctuality of that child at the school where he/she is a registered student. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The law regarding **term time holidays (planned absences)**:

We are obliged to follow the government guidelines, clarified in 2017, which state that any time taken off during term time will be unauthorised and parents or carers liable to a penalty notice unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Such circumstances might include children taking time to see a family member who is forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting; a parent, grandparent or other close relative being seriously or terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday; or if 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 better deal with the situation. If leave is taken without authorisation it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence. A Penalty Notice, if issued, is per parent per child. The amount is £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. After 28 days the case may be escalated for prosecution at the Magistrates' Court.

If you are uncertain as to whether a planned term time absence might be classed as being an exceptional circumstance, please contact the school and ask to speak to the Attendance Officer. To apply for an authorised leave of absence during term time, please complete the '*Application for Leave of Absence Letter*' which can be found on the school website. This will then be reviewed by the Pincipal, or SLA that acts on their behalf, and a decision made on whether or not the leave should be authorised. We ask that parents/carers do not make travel arrangements before the planned absence has been authorised.

Further guidance for families: When **sporting activities** are likely to be authorised:

Over recent years, the school has seen an upturn in the number of requests from families for students to be absent from school due to sports training camps and competitions. Although each case will be considered individually, we have created the following guidance to give an indication of the likely decision by the school when deciding to authorise or unauthorise the planned absence.

- up to 2 days of absence, due to a student taking part in a major sporting event or special training opportunity, will usually be authorised.
- 3 days or more of absence will usually only be authorised if it is for a major national or international competition, when the dates are set by a recognised governing body. Training camps, whether inside or outside the UK, are usually unauthorised as the dates could have been organised for during a holiday.
- students attending a sporting event, who are not competing but wish to attend to support a competitor (e.g. sibling), will usually be unauthorised.

3. Implementation

The College will:

- ensure that school policy with regard to term-time holidays is clearly stated on the college website and is regularly communicated to parents;
- remind parents and the wider community of the importance of ensuring their children's regular, uninterrupted school attendance;
- actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term-time;
- inform parents that they do not have any right or entitlement to expect term-time leave to be granted and that all leave is granted at the discretion of the Headteacher (or those authorised to exercise discretion on his behalf);
- advise parents that if leave is taken without authorisation it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence;
- advise parents that non-attendance or absence that is unauthorised that is 90% or less could result in legal enforcement including Penalty Notices or prosecution;
- provide attendance data on the termly report, and
- report on attendance to the Local Governing Body and Anglian Learning Trust

4. Promoting Attendance

The school uses opportunities as they arise to remind parents and students of the importance of attendance (e.g. parent information evenings), the student planner and home/school agreements. Attendance is also celebrated through assemblies, certificates and attendance awards.

In addition, the following personnel have a key role in supporting good attendance.

4.1. Senior Lead on Attendance (SLA)

The SLA will:

- give attendance a high profile at staff briefings and school events;
- monitor whole school absence and persistent absence data and regularly update the Senior Leadership Team, Local Governors and Anglian Learning Trust.
- meet with the Attendance Officer weekly to review attendance of students at the school and plan interventions for students causing concern;
- meet Heads of Learning, fortnightly, to review the attendance of their year groups and decide on appropriate actions for students that are persistently absent.
- communicate and support the implementation of these interventions with Head of Learning and other stakeholders;

4.2. Attendance Officer

The attendance officer will:

- oversee administration of Class Charts Attendance system;
- oversee administration of the 3-letter warning system;
- refer to the Attendance Service if a student fails to meet an Attendance Target set following a Parent Contract Meeting;
- collate evidence that may be required by the Attendance Service.
- streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures;
- keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised;
- support the work of the SLA, Heads of Learning and Form tutors by:
 - providing regular attendance information;
 - messaging parents/carer on 1st day of absence using the TEXT system.
 - alerting the SLA, Heads of Learning, or other stakeholders when concerns arise;
 - monitor Class Charts to ensure accuracy of record keeping;
 - keeping the SLA informed of inaccurate marking of staff registers as part of an alert system for staff who may not be maintaining accurate recording of registers.

4.3. Heads of Learning

Year Heads will:

- give attendance a high profile at assemblies and school events;
- monitor year group attendance;
- implement a system of rewards and sanctions;
- support Form Tutors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions;
- review the weekly attendance intervention list generated by the Attendance Officer and SLA and complete any necessary actions within two weeks when possible;
- lead on strategies to improve attendance of students who are identified as being a concern through meetings with students and parents;
- support the implementation of beneficial 'school actions' identified during parent contract meetings.

4.4. Form Tutors

Form tutors will:

- be a good role model for students;
- give attendance a high profile;
- praise students for arriving on time;
- take prompt action where students are late or absent without explanation, recording lateness and referring to Year Head;
- keep an accurate register, and
- inform the Head of Learning when absence is causing concern.

4.5. Class Teachers

Teachers will:

- praise students for their punctuality to lessons;
- maintain an accurate class register,
- alert the Attendance Officer if there are concerns over student absence.
- Remain vigilant, for truancy, reporting to the behavior team, when a student is absent, when it is clear they are in school

4.6. Parents

Parents will:

- ensure that children leave for school on time every day;
- contact the school every morning a child is absent by 8.15am.
- Respond to messages and communications made by the school
- Endeavor not to take children out of school in term time. This includes, organizing medical appointments, outside of school hours (were possible)
- notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance.

4.7. Students

Students will:

- arrive in time for registration every morning at 0840am and on time for every other lesson. Students should arrive for 14:05 for Period 5.
- After September 2023, students will need to arrive for Period 1 at 08.40am for AM registration and 1.30PM for PM registration.
- be punctual for lessons;
- sign in at Reception if they are late arriving for school;
- sign out at Reception if they leave school during any part of the school day
- tell their Form Tutor or Head of Learning if they are having any problems attending school.

5. The Attendance Service (Local Authority)

The Attendance Service expects schools to work with parents and pupils at an early stage to resolve problems, this is nearly always successful. The Attendance Service has a legal role and if other ways of resolving attendance have failed, the Attendance Service can use legal sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the magistrates' court.

6. The Attendance Team includes:

- Attendance Officer
- Senior Lead on Attendance (Assistant Head)
- Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO)
- Education Inclusion Manager (EIO)
- Year Heads

7. Support for Students and Parents

The College provides support for parents and students if they are struggling to attend school, including the following:

- Accurate attendance reports through Class Charts and ALIS.
- Informal phone calls and meetings with appropriate staff members to discuss emerging/ongoing issues with agreed 'school actions' that should help support attendance.
- Pastoral Support, including Nurture Sessions, Emotional Literacy or Counselling.
- When appropriate, the school can complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA) that may lead to local authority support, such as a Family Support Worker and/or Young People's

Worker.

- When appropriate, the school can arrange an Individual Alternative Education Plan (IAEP) for a student. This can lead to a reduced timetable/curriculum if required to support attendance.

8. Sanctions for Poor Attendance and Punctuality

The College reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions to fulfil its obligations with respect to school attendance:

- School Detention
- Subject department detention for punctuality
- Other, more serious sanctions, for repeated defiance of school rules

Attendance Service involvement and referral:

- generally, the school will instigate at least 3 interventions with parents/ guardians, prior to referring the case to the Attendance Service (for example; an attendance phone call or email; a letter from the 3-letter system; a Parent Contract Meeting). This is to enable any barriers to accessing education to be identified and appropriate support offered.
- before referral to the Attendance Service, the school will offer the parent(s) a Parent Contract Meeting in which support will be offered, school actions identified and attendance targets set within a monitoring period.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered student fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school offering the parent the opportunity to enter into a parenting contract following a student's truancy or non-attendance under section 19 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered student fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the school instigating a Penalty Notice under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

- parenting orders, Education Supervision Orders or Penalty Notices can also be issued by the Attendance Service on behalf of the LA.
- prosecution by the Attendance Service on behalf of the LA.

Policy Review

Policies will normally be reviewed on a 3-year cycle unless otherwise stated. This review may be brought forward as required by the School to reflect changes in supporting advice/guidance.

Appendix A: Procedure for reporting absence at school

1. If a child is absent from school the following procedures are required to ensure the school is fully informed.

1.1. Short term absence or unplanned absences

- Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.00am or as soon as practically possible. Parents must continue to notify us every consecutive day.
- Parents can notify the school, using the Class Charts App or by logging into Class Charts.
- Parents / Carers can also do this by calling the school number 01223 811250 and then dialling 444.

1.2. Continued absence

- In the case of longer-term absence, the Attendance Officer is informed so that appropriate support can be provided.

1.3. Ten days' absence

- A student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children Missing in Education Officers, this is a legal requirement. This can be done immediately if a student is vulnerable or open to Social Care.

2. If a child needs to be absent during the school day the following procedures are required.

- The school attendance officer is contacted by the parent using the Class Charts System or the attendance line to inform of reason for absence during the day, e.g. dental appointment.
- The student must sign out before they leave the school premises and sign in on their return.

3. School action in the case of student absence

- On the first day of absence, the Attendance Officer will use a text service to confirm absence with the parent if contact has not already been made.
- In the case of student attendance that is deemed 'at risk', the parent may be contacted by the school, by letter or phone, to discuss absence and actions for improving attendance.
- In the case of a student whose absence is persistently below the 90% Persistent Absence (PA) level, the parents/carers may be contacted by the college and asked to attend a Parent Contract Meeting, where a formal attendance target and monitoring period will be set.

Appendix B: Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable at Bottisham Village College. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss vital work and information. Lateness is also disruptive to lessons.

1. The school day

The school starts with a form registration at 0840 **am**. Any student who arrives after this time is registered as late.

AM registers are closed by 09.00**am**. A student who is late after this time should sign in at Reception, where they will be given a mark to show they are on site. However, this will be counted as an unauthorised absence for the morning session (coded as 'U' on the register) unless they have a genuine reason for lateness i.e. illness, medical.

Afternoon register starts during Period 3 at 1.30**pm**. Afternoon registers close at 1.40**pm**

If a child arrives late to school, for example due to a dental appointment, a note must accompany the child on their return when they sign in. In this case, the absence will be recorded as authorised.

2. Lesson monitor

Every lesson is registered through the school internal system, which is Class Charts. Teachers are expected to ensure that the register is taken as promptly as possible. The reason for this is to track punctuality and in school truancy. It is essential that registers are recorded accurately, using the internal system. On the rare occasion that the register is not accessible on the system, a paper copy of the register should be used. In this case the teacher is expected to complete the register, not the students, and return it to the Attendance Officer, promptly.

If a student is late in arriving to lesson, the teacher will record lateness on the system. In this case, an N should be changed to an L.

The Head of Learning has the overview of punctuality and will follow up lateness with individual students, who will be expected to make up the time lost. In cases of persistent lateness, parents/carers will be contacted by the College to remind them of their legal obligation to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. If lateness fails to improve, then a formal attendance target and monitoring period may be put in place following a Parent Contract Meeting.

Appendix C: Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, either as authorised or unauthorised absence.

1. Authorised absences

Authorised absences are approved by the Year Head, SLA or Attendance Officer on behalf of the Head teacher. An example of an authorised absence that may be approved would be a student observing a religious event or a morning or afternoon away from school for a reason such as illness or medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall within the school day. We do ask that families organise medical/dental appointments outside of the school day whenever possible.

All absence must be communicated by direct communication with the Attendance Officer using attendance@bottishamvc.org or the ClassCharts app.

2. Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which permission has not been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- unexplained absence;
- students who regularly arrive late, after registration has closed;
- holidays/days off school, and
- students staying off school for invalid reasons such as shopping, caring for siblings, etc.

This type of absence can lead to the Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. The school reserve the right to unauthorise absence if given a reason to dispute authenticity of the reason provided, for example; the student has a history of truancy or unusual patterns of absence.

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time

without permission

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

3. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance. The school will use anxiety mapping tools to explore potential barriers for
- Coordinate the Step Back programme to support reintegration to school. This may include a phased return, Nurture Interventions or Breakfast Club.
- Deploy the Family Partnership worker to conduct home visits, work with the family to address barriers to attending school.
- Consider external agency involvement, including Early Help or Social Care.

4. Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed

B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day