

Attendance Policy

To be read in conjunction with

- Behaviour in Schools July 2022
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration Amendment\) Regulations 2016 which set out the grounds for deletion from roll.](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance 2022](#)

Aim

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. For vulnerable students regular attendance is also an important protective factor.

In line with Government Expectations, all BMS staff (both teaching and support aim to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and students to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
- ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence;
- support parents/guardians to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly;
- work in partnership with the local authority and other local partners
- ensure all students are punctual to their lessons.

BMS fully complies with the law, which requires all schools including independent schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All students (regardless of their age) are placed on both registers. At BMS we also recognise our duty to work to improve attendance using the model Expect, Monitor, Listen and Understand, Facilitate support, Formalise support and Enforce which is laid out in the most recent guidance, [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

BMS also recognises that Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation. BMS takes action when children are persistently absent from school following the guidance in Working Together to improve school attendance’.

The Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance is Mrs Jude Goodacre, Deputy Head (Pastoral and Student Progress), jgoodacre@bedmod.co.uk, tel. 01234 332500.

1. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance

1.1. Completing the register

- Each form tutor is responsible for completing the register for their class. It is a legal requirement to complete the register at the beginning of each school session morning and afternoon. At the start of each school year, staff receive reminders of the procedures for completing the register.
- The school day starts at 8.40am. Registers are completed by 8:45am on iSAMS. If a hard copy has had to be used this must be returned to School Office immediately. If a student arrives at school after the completion of the register, they report to the School Office and are marked late. In the afternoon registration takes place at 2.20 pm for the Senior School, and 1.40pm for the Junior School.
- The register closes at 9.30am – any student who arrives after this time will be marked as absent for that session.

1.2 Monitoring attendance

The pastoral team monitor attendance at school and in each lesson. School attendance is measured in half days; in the Senior School, registration happens in every lesson and action taken as appropriate if a student is, for example, absent from a lesson but marked as being in school that day.

- Attendance data for each student is analysed frequently and included in a student's annual report.
- A parent will be contacted by the school on the first day of absence unless notification as to the reason for absence has been received by the school.
- If a student's attendance falls below 90% the school will review this closely with the parent and, where appropriate, strategies and interventions will be put in place (see persistent absence).
- If a student is having difficulty in attending school for any reason, parents/guardians should contact the school at the earliest opportunity (see Aims section).
- All schools have to maintain attendance data for all students. Requests for references from other educational institutions or potential employers can include questions about attendance.

The School expects and encourages good attendance by students.

2. Absence from School

2.1 Unplanned absence

If your child is absent from school, you should contact the school on the first day of absence BEFORE 10.00am via the Report an Absence button on My School Portal. If you are unable to access My School Portal, please contact as below, providing your child's name, form class / tutor group and reason for absence:

Junior School:

Junior School Reception, jsreception@bedmod.co.uk or tel. 01234 332513

Senior School / Sixth Form:

Main school reception, reception@bedmod.co.uk or tel. 01234 332500

2.2 Leave of Absence

The School encourages parents/guardians to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible agreement should be sought in advance and the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.

The school will consider each application for a leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the School will determine the number of days a student can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head's discretion.

If a planned leave of absence is necessary permission should be requested via the Leave of Absence button on My School Portal. If you are unable to access My School Portal a request should be made via email to:

Junior School: Mrs Paula Pacyna, Junior School Head

Senior School: student's Head of Year

Sixth Form: student's Senior Tutor

In the event that permission for leave of absence is granted, students, supported where appropriate by their parents/guardians, are expected to make up any work missed. Students in years 9, 10 and 11 and in the Sixth Form will need to contact each of their subject teachers before permission is applied for to ascertain any particular impact on the GCSE / A-level programme.

2.3 Holidays during term time

The law changed in September 2013, and schools can no longer give permission for holidays during term time unless exceptional circumstances can be shown. The occasions where permission will be given for holidays during term time will therefore be very limited.

All requests for leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday must be sent via email, including the reason for the request, to the Head, head@bedmod.co.uk.

2.4 Arriving after the start of morning registration

If a student is late arriving at school, they MUST sign in as below, stating the time and reason for lateness:

Junior School: Junior School Reception

Senior School: School Office

Sixth Form: Text to the Sixth Form Administrator tel.: 07467 373090

2.5 Leaving before the end of last lesson

Any student leaving the school site (permission having been granted) MUST sign out as below:

Junior School: Parent/Guardian to collect from Junior School Reception

Senior School: Main School Reception

Sixth Form: Text to Sixth Form Administrator tel. 07467 373090

2.6 Managing Attendance

If a student is recorded as absent from school and parents/guardians have not notified the school, the Attendance Officer will make contact on the first day of absence. If there are

any questions regarding the reason for absence, the Attendance Officer or pastoral staff may make contact.

3 Students living at more than one address/non-resident parents/guardians

Where parents/guardians no longer live together or the student only lives with one parent and contact details for both parents/guardians have been provided to the schools, any parent seeking permission to take their child out of school will be asked if they have notified the other parent of this request.

4 Punctuality

If a student is late arriving at school, they MUST sign in at the School Office stating the time and reason for lateness. Any student leaving the school site (permission being granted) must sign out at reception.

Students are expected to arrive on time for each lesson with appropriate materials. If students are late for lessons, then the sanctions in the schools' behaviour policies may be applied.

On occasions when a larger group of students are late due to traffic or transport issues, the school may use period 1 to record attendance.

5 Monitoring Attendance

Attendance data will be monitored on a regular basis and any patterns or concerns will be raised with the Head of Year in the first instance. Daily information on absence is shared with the pastoral teams. In addition, the attendance officer shares regular reports of 90% attendance and below with pastoral staff.

Termly attendance data is shared with Governors at School Committee as part of the termly and annual safeguarding report.

6 Children Absent from Education and Persistent Absence

The DFE states that a child has persistent absence when they have missed more than 10% of possible attendance sessions. This means any child with absence below 90% for a full academic year.

In line with Government guidelines, BMS pastoral teams will monitor the attendance of individual students and work with parents/guardians to ensure that additional steps are taken to support any student with persistent absence. This will include students who have long term illnesses or who have been suspended from school.

The support may be in the form of a letter, drawing parents/guardians' attention to their child's absence or it may be offering the support of outside agencies such as Greys Medical Centre in the event of a long-term medical absence. In addition, the school will also consult Education Welfare Teams for the area in which the child resides.

Where attendance is poor the Local Authority does have powers to take action to enforce school attendance. Periods of unauthorised absence where the student is not known to be ill, and the parents/guardians cannot be contacted can lead to a student being removed from the school roll.

7 Supporting students during an extended period of absence and when they return to school following a period of absence.

The school will support children in the following ways:

- when a student has extended absence the school (via the Tutor) will liaise with parent/carer and subject teachers to arrange for appropriate work to be sent home;
- the Tutor will contact the parent/carer on a weekly basis;
- Subject teachers will mark and assess work giving clear feedback and liaising with parent/carer or other agencies to support student learning and progress;
- the form tutor and/or Head of Year will ensure a programme of induction back to school is in place for the appropriate time.

8 Students Moving to a New Address and/or School

- Where the parent of a student notifies the school that the student will live at another address schools must record in the admission register: (a) the full name of the parent with whom the student will live, (b) the new address, and (c) the date from when it is expected the student will live at this address.
- Where a parent notifies the school that the student is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the name of the other school, and (b) the date of when the student first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

9 Legal requirements for the publication of attendance information

Reporting to parents/guardians

On every written report parents/guardians receive details of their child's attendance and punctuality. This information includes the possible attendance, the number of authorised absences (and therefore by deduction the actual attendance) the number of unauthorised absences and the number of lates.

10 In the event of adverse weather

In the event of adverse weather, BMS may make changes to the way parents/guardians are asked to notify the school of a child's absence. When this is the case, information will be sent out via Post-modern.

11 Children missing in Education (including Safeguarding response)

BMS fully accepts its responsibilities to provide a safeguarding response to Children Missing in Education and understands as a school it plays a key role in ensuring children do not become CME.

A child missing from education is not in itself a child protection matter, and there may be an innocent explanation for this. However, regular school attendance is an important safeguard and unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability.

Schools should endeavour to deal with this problem in three ways:

- By preventing poor school attendance and truancy;
- By acting once absence occurred to establish children's safety and try to get them back to school;
- By taking action to trace children whose whereabouts are not known.

BMS will inform both **Bedford Borough and the relevant Local Authority** (i.e., the one in which the child resides) when a child's name is about to be deleted from the admission register under all fifteen grounds outside the standard transition points (Junior School Year 6 into 7 and Senior School Year 11 into 12).

When removing a name, the notification to the Local Authority will include (a) the full name of the student, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the student normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the student's future address and destination school and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the student's name is to be removed from the admission register.

The school will **make reasonable enquiries** to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the Local Authority before deleting the student's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8 (1), sub paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

BMS will notify the Local Authority **within five days** of adding a student's name to the admission register at a **non-standard** transition point.

As an independent school, BMS does not use the CTF (Common Transfer Files). However, where these files are sent by a students' previous school, BMS will either accept or reject the file.

A child may be removed from the school following a written request from parents/guardians to educate at home. In the event of this happening, the relevant Local Authority and Early Help service will be informed.

If any member of the school staff has reason to believe a child is missing from or about to be missing from education, they must inform the DSL. The DSL will then inform the Local Authority, Early Help or in the case of a Child in Need or a Child in Need of Protection, MASH or the police.

In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Services and/or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime.
- The child is subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- The child is subject of Section 47 enquiries.
- The child is looked after.
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household.
- There is a history of the family moving frequently.
- There are serious issues of attendance.

All Practitioners should follow the appropriate Local Authority CME procedures.

Mrs. J Goodacre
Deputy Head (Pastoral and Student Progress)
Designated Safeguarding Lead

October 2023
Review Date October 2024