Attendance Policy 2025

To be read in conjunction with

- Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- 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 (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

1. 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) will be trained 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.
- Use the correct codes to ensure that the register accurately reflects every child's attendance.

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 (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

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 statutory guidance.

The Senior Attendance Champion is Mrs Jude Goodacre, Deputy Head (Pastoral and Student Progress), jgoodacre@bedmod.co.uk, tel. 01234 332500.

2. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance

2.1 Completing the register

- Attendance registers will be taken at a consistent time for all pupils within each phase of the school in accordance with statutory guidance
- 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 the 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 (during period 5), and 1.40pm for the Junior School.
- The register closes at 9.15am and 2.50pm – 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/guardian 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/guardian 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.

3 Absence from School

3.1 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

3.2 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.

3.3 Holidays during term time

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.

3.4 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

3.5 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

3.6 Managing Attendance

If a student is recorded as absent from school and parents/guardians have not notified the School, contact will be made 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.

4 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/guardian and contact details for both parents/guardians have been provided to the School, any parent/guardian seeking permission to take their child out of school will be asked if they have notified the other parent/guardian of this request.

5 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.

6 Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

Monitoring attendance

The pastoral teams, supported by the attendance officer, monitor attendance and punctuality at school and in each lesson. School attendance is measured in half days. However registers are taken every lesson. Attendance data for each student is analysed frequently and where there are patterns for individuals or groups of students, further action is taken.

- A parent/guardian will be contacted on the first day of absence unless notification as to the reason for absence has been received by the school.
- If the School is unable to contact the parents/guardians on the first day of absence, then follow up may include a hand delivered letter or home visit. Where there are safeguarding concerns, external agencies will be contacted for advice.
- If a student's attendance falls below 90% the School will review this closely with the student and parent/guardian and, where appropriate, strategies and interventions will be put in place. This may include a referral to external services who can provide support such as local children's services Early Help.
- If a student is having difficulty in attending school for any reason, parents/guardians should contact their child's tutor or Head of Year at the earliest opportunity so that additional support can be put in place to help overcome any barriers.
- The School also has a duty to take action if a student does not attend school or lessons punctually and where necessary the School will review this closely with student and parent/guardian and where appropriate, strategies and interventions will be put in place.

Attendance data will be monitored on a regular basis and any patterns or concerns will be raised with the form tutor 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.

Improving attendance

The Attendance Officer will provide weekly and termly data for the Pastoral Teams. Heads of Year and Senior Tutors will discuss individual concerns as part of their pastoral meetings.

Any trends will be noted and will be raised and discussed further at the half termly Safeguarding Meetings

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

7 Children Absent from Education, those with unexplained absences and/or 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 have been suspended from school, or who are not attending due to non payment of fees.

The support may be in the form of a review meeting (in person or on Teams) or a letter, drawing parents/guardians' attention to their child's absence. In some cases it may be offering the support of external agencies such through community based Early Help or more targeted Family Help. . In addition, where the absence is severe (i.e. below 50%) and/or the students/parents and guardians are not engaging in support, the School will also consult Education Welfare Teams for the area in which the child resides and consder enhanced support, multi-agency involvement and formalised attendance plans were appropriate.

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. In these circumstances the local authority will be informed.

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

The School will support children return to full time education in the following ways:

- when a student has extended absence, the School (via the Tutor) will liaise with parent/guardian and subject teachers to arrange for appropriate work to be sent home;
- Where possible the student may be able to access remote learning. However this will only be used where necessary for the shortest period possible and will form part of a structured reintegration plan.
- the Tutor will contact the parent/guardian on a weekly basis;
- subject teachers will mark and assess work, giving clear feedback and liaising with parent/guardian 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 with mental or physical health needs or with special educational needs

BMS recognizes that many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these students are still expected to attend school regularly. In many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it. A prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future. Where this is the case, pastoral staff will ensure that additional support is provided. Parents and guardians are

encouraged to communicate with school staff at the earliest possible opportunity when their child is hesitant about attending school. Contact should be made with the form tutor in the first instance.

Some students face more complex barriers to attendance. This includes students who have SEND or long term physical or mental health conditions. In these situations, the School recognizes the student's right to an education and therefore ensures that reasonable, additional support is provided.

School staff will work closely with parents and guardians as well as any other agencies involved with the young person. This may include medical professionals, CAMHs, specialist Nurses and Children's Services. The focus will be on ensuring regular attendance and the process will be based on the individual circumstance but likely to involve:

- understanding the individual needs of the student and their family;
- working in partnership to put school support in place as well as working with other agencies;
- regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to ensure it meets the individual's needs.

In addition, where necessary:

- additional pastoral support will be provided with the aim of improving attendance;
- adjustments will be made to practice and policy where necessary, along with formal reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010;
- where appropriate a time limited phased return to school may apply.

For students with SEND, staff will work in partnership with students and parents/guardians to ensure that strategies to remove any in school barriers are regularly discussed. In addition**,** pastoral staff will work closely with the SEN**D**CO and Additional Needs Faculty to ensure that additional support is in place and where necessary a time limited phased return to school is in place.

Medical evidence will only be needed in a small minority of cases.

Where parents/guardians do not engage in support, the School will seek to formalize the support with the assistance of Bedford Borough Education Welfare Team and the local authority in which the child resides.

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

9. Students who are young carers

Some students have caring responsibilities at home, and this can increase the barriers to regular attendance. Where known, young carers will be recorded in the school census and care will be taken to work with parents to put appropriate support in place. This will include working with the local authority or supporting via Community-based Early help or Family Help.

10 Students Moving to a New Address and/or School

10.1 Where the parent/guardian 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/guardian 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.

10.2 Where a parent/guardian 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.

11 Legal requirements for the publication of attendance information

Reporting to parents/guardians

Parents and/or guardians receive details of their child's attendance and punctuality via My School Portal. 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.

12 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.

13 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/guardian with whom the student normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent/guardian, (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.

Promoting and incentivizing good attendance

The promotion of good attendance is woven into the ethos of Bedford Modern School. All students are encouraged to make the most of the many opportunities in both the academic and co-curricular side of the School. Staff consistently draw attention to the benefits of playing a full part in school life such as enhanced career prospects, improved mental health and well being and achieving Academic Awards, Eagle Awards and other prizes not to mention sporting achievements.

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

October 2026
Review Date October 2027

Appendix A

Statutory Attendance Codes

		This code is classified for statistical purposes as
Attending the School		
Code / \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session	Attending
Code L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Attending
Attending a place other than the school		
Code K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Attending an approved educational activity
Code V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending an approved educational activity
Code P	Participating in a sporting activity	Attending an approved educational activity
Code W	Attending work experience	Attending an approved educational activity
Code B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Attending an approved educational activity
Absent - leave of absence		
Code C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
Code M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
Code J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence
Code S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence
Code X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not a possible attendance
Code C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence
Code D	Dual registered at another school	Not a possible attendance to avoid double counting
Code C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Authorised absence
Absent – other authorised reasons		
Code T:	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Whilst for statistical purposes this is counted as authorised absence, if a

		pupil's attendance was to fall below an acceptable level consideration may be given to attendance enforcement
Code R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised absence
Code E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Authorised absence
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Code Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not a possible attendance
Code Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not a possible attendance
Code Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not a possible attendance
Code Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not a possible attendanc
Code Y4:	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not a possible attendance
Code Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not a possible attendance
Code Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Code Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
Absent - unauthorised absence		
Code G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
Code N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence
Code O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence
Code U:	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence
Administrative codes		
Code Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	This code is not collected for statistical purpose
Code #	Planned whole school closure	This code is not collected for statistical purpose

Appendix B

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Definition

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) refers to a child or young person experiencing significant difficulty attending school due to emotional factors, such as anxiety, low mood, fear, distress, social challenges, or unmet needs. EBSA is not considered truancy or deliberate non-compliance. Instead, it is viewed as a response to underlying emotional, social, environmental, or educational factors that create barriers to attendance.

Principles

The school recognises that regular attendance is essential for educational achievement, wellbeing, and positive life outcomes. We are committed to promoting inclusion, identifying concerns early, working collaboratively with families and external agencies, understanding individual barriers, implementing person-centred interventions, maintaining high aspirations, and treating pupils with empathy, dignity and respect.

Early Identification

Staff will monitor indicators including increasing lateness, sporadic attendance, physical symptoms without medical explanation, heightened anxiety, emotional distress, withdrawal from peers, and parental concerns regarding attendance. Parents are encouraged to contact school to seek support at the first sign of reluctance to attend school.

Graduated Response

The school will use an Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach. Assess: gather information and identify factors affecting attendance. Plan: develop a personalised support plan with the pupil and family. Do: implement agreed interventions and reasonable adjustments. Review: monitor progress regularly and adapt provision where necessary.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are essential partners. The school will maintain regular communication, listen to concerns, develop support plans collaboratively and involve families in review processes.

Multi-Agency Working

Where appropriate, the school may work with Educational Psychology Services, Mental Health Support Teams, CAMHS, Early Help, SEND Services and Attendance and Inclusion Teams.

Monitoring and Review

Support plans will be reviewed at agreed intervals to evaluate attendance, wellbeing and engagement outcomes. Interventions will be adapted where progress is limited.