

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. Introduction

At Baysgarth School we believe that attendance is strongly linked to students' motivation and academic achievement. Poor attendance and punctuality threaten the rights of young people to an effective education. This Attendance and Punctuality Policy states the responsibility of the school, student and parent in securing good attendance and punctuality.

2. Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

This policy summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents. These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that Parents and Carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a Parent or Carer who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.

Baysgarth School works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that Parents and Carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Fixed Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison.

3. Aims of Policy

The aims of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy are:

- To ensure all students attend Baysgarth School regularly and punctually, in order to ensure they achieve academically and make the most of all opportunities offered
- Students whose attendance is a barrier to their academic success receives swift and targeted support in order to secure improvements.
- Strong partnerships between Baysgarth School and parents are needed to secure good attendance.

All leaders within Baysgarth School are relentless in their role to establish a positive learning climate, including outstanding attendance and punctuality. They are uncompromising in their expectations and challenge, where appropriate, colleagues, students and parents.

4. Principles

- The aim of Baysgarth School is to provide a safe and caring environment where every student can attend and engage with all opportunities offered.
- It is the responsibility of all staff, students and parents to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Students and families may require support with regards to attendance and/or punctuality, and the staff at Baysgarth School will endeavour to provide this.
- All students and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality will be challenged but support will be provided to ensure strong partnership working
- Students will be rewarded for good attendance and punctuality.
- Baysgarth School will endeavour to implement rigorous and robust procedures for attendance and punctuality, providing accurate information to Parents and Carers.
- Students who have been absent from school for a prolonged period will have a personalised support programme to positively reintegrate them back into school.
- Baysgarth School will support all aspects of the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2003: 'Every Child Matters' by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- Baysgarth School will have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and reasonable adjustments will be made for students.

5. Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

We strive at Baysgarth School to ensure all students have a curriculum that is appropriate for their needs and which allows them to be successful. The curriculum is reviewed annually and the Inclusion Manager monitors the curriculum of students who have additional needs.

Attendance is celebrated every week through the student profile, which allows students to monitor their own attendance. Rewards for attendance is built into the rewards system to ensure the profile of attendance is high across the school.

A strong pastoral system is in place with tutors, Heads of House and Learning Managers. These roles within school have a focus on raising attendance and removing barriers to attending school. This includes highly effective transitional arrangements for all students with their primary schools.

The school also has a dedicated attendance officer who works with parents and students to secure good attendance.

6. Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of Baysgarth School have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and on time;
- Be punctual to all lessons;
- Ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons (including intervention and 1-1 sessions) and inform Student Support if they cannot be registered for any reason;
- Ensure all messages and notes from Parents and Carers are taken to the appropriate place.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends regularly, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn;
- Ensure their child attends every day Baysgarth School is open unless, they are too ill to do so;
- Avoid keeping their child away from school for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation;
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time;
- Immediately inform the Attendance Office or Student Support if their child is unable to attend before the start of the school day, including the reason for absence and expected date of return. If no indication of a return date has been given, Parents and Carers should contact the school on each day of absence;

Subject Teachers are expected to:

- Welcome and value the attendance of all students to lessons.
- Accurately register students within the first 10 minutes of each and every period including double lessons. Lesson registration is a vital element in tracking post-registration truancy and records will be used by the Education and Inclusion Officer in communications with Parents and Carers, and as evidence in legal proceedings.
- Accurately record lateness using an 'L' mark and entering how many minutes late a student is to the lesson and apply an appropriate sanction if necessary, as per the Behaviour Policy.
- Ensure that students know the register is being taken and the importance of this legal document.
- Identify student absence to lessons and take appropriate action using the school's Behaviour Policy, if appropriate.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

Tutors are expected to:

- Discuss any periods of absence with students on their return and ensure any necessary information is passed to the relevant staff.
- Discuss attendance weekly with students using the student tracker and celebrate those students whose attendance is good or is improving.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and raise these with the Head of House.
- Work with identified students, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.
- Ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are passed to the Attendance Officer.
- Discuss attendance with Parents and Carers at Parents' Evenings, as appropriate.

Heads of House are expected to:

- Monitor absence and attendance regularly, by use of the Weekly Data Sheet and ensure this is communicated weekly to update Tutors through meetings/briefings on school, house and year attendance and punctuality, and ensuring they are aware of House priorities.
- Ensure the student tracker is shared with the students weekly and the tutor discusses attendance with the group as well as individuals
- Provide targeted support for identified students, whose attendance is causing concern as per escalation procedure.
- Hold Tutors to account for the targeted work with individuals in order to secure improvements in their attendance and/or punctuality.
- Promote and celebrate attendance through assemblies.

Inclusion Manager/Learning Managers are expected to:

- Provide targeted support for identified students, whose attendance is causing concern as per escalation procedure.
- Ensure the weekly attendance for Looked After Children is monitored and interventions are planned through their Personalised Education Plan.
- Ensure attendance is a priority in all EHA, CP and CIN Plans.
- Ensure all exclusions and isolation placements are communicated with the Attendance Officer

Student Support/Reception staff are expected to:

- Receive calls and messages from Parents and Carers regarding student absence and ensure these are inputted into the communication log and communicated with the Attendance Officer.
- Contact Parents and Carers regarding student absence, where necessary.

Attendance Officer is expected to:

- Lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the school, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Ensure attendance is celebrated and rewarded on a regular basis.
- Ensure all registers are completed accurately and reliably, and inform Heads of Faculties and the Senior Leadership Team where there are persistent concerns
- Ensure all absence notes or holiday request forms are processed and recorded.
- Monitor daily and weekly attendance, absence and punctuality daily and implement appropriate attendance procedures.
- Provide a detailed weekly analysis of attendance and punctuality, which is shared with all Heads of House, Inclusion Manager, Learning Managers and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and liaise with the appropriate members of staff ensuring all information is communicated effectively.
- Provide targeted support for identified students, whose attendance is causing concern as per escalation procedure.
- Work collaboratively with outside agencies including the Local Authority, where appropriate, to improve attendance of individual students.
- Ensure the Education and Inclusion Officer has an active caseload and it is regularly reviewed for impact.
- Identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Hold Heads of House, the Inclusion Manager and Learning Managers to account for the targeted work with individuals, in order to secure improvements to their attendance and/or punctuality.

7. Admission Register

The school is required to have an admissions register and an attendance register.

The admission register contains the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

Students are entered onto the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or

notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly. Reasonable attempts must be made to ascertain the whereabouts of the student. See Section 16 Children Missing in Education.

Baysgarth School notifies the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register.

8. Registration

Registers are legal documents and can be used in legal proceedings as evidence. Therefore, staff are expected to complete registers for all timetabled lessons, interventions and tutor time accurately and within the first 10 minutes of the published start time.

The law requires the register to be taken twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session. Students will be registered in their lessons by their class teachers. The morning register closes 30 minutes after the published start of the school day, after which students will be marked as an unauthorised absence using a U code, unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.

The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes. Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'Advice on School Attendance' published 2012 by the DfE.

9. Punctuality

Baysgarth School places great importance on the need for punctuality in attending school and all lessons. The school gates close at 8.25am and all students are expected to be on site at this time.

Any student arriving after this time should enter through reception and report to the Attendance Officer with their reason for lateness. Lateness is tracked and monitored and the Attendance Officer will work with the pastoral system and class teachers to address persistent offenders.

10. Leaving the School Site

Any Key Stage 3 or 4 student who leaves the school premises during the day for an appointment should go to Student Support where an 'Authorised Absence Pass' will be given, which gives permission for the student to be off the site.

Parental/official verification for the reason for leaving the site will be sought/looked at before pass is given. The Authorised Absence Pass must be shown if a student is challenged outside the school by the Police or the Education and Inclusion Service.

If a student is sent home as a result of first aid or illness then a First Aider or member of Student Support will contact parents and inform them, ensuring an Authorised Absence pass is provided for the student.

If a student is sent home as a result of an exclusion then the Inclusion Admin Assistant or Learning Manager will make contact with parents and inform them, ensuring an Authorised Absence pass is provided for the student.

11. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where Baysgarth School has given approval for absence in advance, or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents and Carers may not authorise absence; only the school can do this.

Parents should immediately inform the Attendance Officer or Student Support if their child is unable to attend before the start of the school day, including the reason for absence and expected date of return. If no indication of a return date has been given, Parents and Carers should contact the school on each day of absence. A note in the student's planner should be provided with details of the absence on their return signed by a Parent or Carer

Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours, wherever possible. Where this is not possible, students should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment.

Following an explanation from Parents and Carers regarding a student's absence, Baysgarth School will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise or not authorise, accordingly. This explanation can be in the form of a letter or phone conversation.

12. School Procedures for Dealing with Absence

If a student is absent at morning registration without contact from a Parent or Carer to explain the absence, the school will contact Parents or Carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact Parents and Carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence. Contact will be via an automated message. Parents and Carers are then encouraged to contact the school directly to discuss the issue with the Attendance Officer.

The school asks that Parents and Carers ensure that the school has the most up to date contact details at all times. If any details change, please contact Student Support to inform them.

If no parental contact has been possible through text or phone, a letter will be sent requesting information regarding the absence and requesting Parents and Carers to contact the school directly.

Parents and Carers are asked to provide a note to explain an absence on the student's return. This should be taken to Student Support and will be retained and placed in the student's file

13. Persistent Absence

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year, for whatever reason (student's attendance is below 90%). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and we need Parents' and Carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any student whose attendance has reached the Persistence Absence threshold, or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention.

Where Parents and Carers fail to cooperate with support and strategies provided by Baysgarth School, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

14. Leave of Absence during Term Time

Government Legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence; please refer to the Department of Education for the latest guidance.

The school requires a parent/carer to complete a Leave of Absence form at least four weeks before the date of the required leave, unless this relates to a family illness or funeral, and submit to the Attendance Officer for consideration. This form will be assessed by the Head Teacher in light of the government guidance in order to make a decision.

When making a decision to authorise an absence, the Head Teacher has to assess if the circumstances are exceptional.

The school considers the following to be exceptional, however each case will be assessed individually:

- A service personnel parent is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- An absence from school that is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence may be required directly from the medical professional.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative.
- Participation in activities linked to music, arts or sport, where the student is performing at an exceptional level and participation will support their development.
- Participation in activities or therapies as recommended as part of individual support plan.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs".
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative.

The Head teacher can determine if the absence is authorised and the length of the authorised absence. The list above is not exhaustive and each application will be considered on the individual circumstances.

Parents and Carers are strongly urged not to take students out of school for holidays during term time. A family holiday would not normally be approved unless the circumstances around the holiday were exceptional. In the event that Parents do need to request a holiday, it is expected that a Leave of Absence Form is submitted to the Attendance Officer at least four weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the Leave of Absence Form. The Headteacher will then consider the request and inform parents of the decision in writing.

Baysgarth School has the right to serve a Fixed Penalty Notice on Parents and Carers who insist on taking their child(ren) out of school without authorisation. Fixed Penalty Notices require each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days (with effect from September 2013). Failure to pay within the

specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any student taking leave of absence without prior notification to the school.

15. Students in Alternative Provision

Students who are receiving their education at alternative provision will still have their attendance checked daily by the staff at Baysgarth School. All providers are expected to provide daily attendance information with the Baysgarth Attendance Officer and a collaborative approach is used when addressing poor or irregular attendance.

16. Children Missing in Education

Baysgarth School monitors student's attendance through the daily registers. The Attendance Officer works with the pastoral staff to identify and address poor or irregular attendance and where appropriate the Local Authority will be informed to support.

Students are entered onto the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the student's whereabouts and the Local Authority will be informed if necessary.

A student will be removed from the admissions register if all reasonable efforts have been made to ascertain the whereabouts of a student who has:

- not returned to school 10 days after an authorised absence
- been absent for 20 consecutive days

Baysgarth works actively with the Local Authority to safeguard and protect all children, making all reasonable efforts to establish the whereabouts of a student before removing them, this can include, in line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004:

- home visits
- checking with relatives
- neighbours
- landlords, private or social housing providers
- contacting agencies involved with the family
- contacting the Ministry of Defence for military families
- checking with other local authorities
- checking with police
- referral to social care if there is a safeguarding risk

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors	Signed: _____ Head Teacher
Date: _____	Date: _____