



Bishop Justus School Policies

Policy Title:	Attendance & Punctuality Policy
LT Responsibility:	Head Teacher
Date:	September 2026
Review:	September 2027

Rationale

As a Church of England school, we want each child to flourish academically and to realise their potential, so that they can have 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). High levels of attendance and excellent punctuality are needed so that students can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. We are committed to providing a welcoming and caring school environment so that each member of the school feels safe and supported. Strong partnerships with parents and carers are essential in ensuring our aims are achieved.

The School and the Aquinas Advisory Council recognise the statutory obligations governing the registration of students in accordance with the [working together to improve school attendance](#) legislation from the Department for Education (DfE).

Contents

1. [Policy Overview](#)
2. [Contact with Parents and Carers](#)
3. [Monitoring of Attendance](#)
4. [Monitoring of Punctuality](#)
5. [Interventions and Legal Sanctions](#)
6. [Procedures and Strategies to support Good Attendance and Punctuality](#)
7. [Annex A: Supporting attendance through reintegration](#)

1

1. Policy Overview

This policy gives notification to parents/carers of actions we will take to promote excellent attendance. In our commitment to promote student attendance and punctuality, Bishop Justus will:

- Promote a positive supportive ethos based on our 6 virtues (Faith, Hope, Love, Courage, Compassion, Wisdom)
- Ensure staff act as role models for standards of attendance and punctuality
- Employ systems and create strong partnerships to inform parents/carers of expectations regarding student attendance
- Emphasise throughout the whole staff the importance of good relationships with students and parents/carers, and respond appropriately to their needs
- Reduce the number of students who are persistently absent (missing more than 10% of school; equivalent to 19 days of learning and more than 95 lessons)
- Work cooperatively with external agencies to support excellent attendance
- Monitor student attendance and punctuality and take appropriate action

- Support long-term absentees with the shared aim of successful re-integration
- If required create a 'stepping stone' bespoke curriculum to meet the needs of individual students finding it difficult to access the whole school curriculum
- Employ systems to identify and tackle internal truancy within our school setting
- Reward excellent or improved attendance in a variety of ways
- Show commitment to staff development strategies for improving attendance
- Follow the 'Every Child Matters' ethos

2. Contact with Parents and Carers

Bishop Justus seeks to work in partnership with parents/carers and to foster a supportive relationship in the interests of the student. Parental contact is always established as a first step and not a last resort.

Our School will take advantage of appropriate opportunities to emphasise the importance of good student attendance and punctuality with parents/carers who are primarily responsible for ensuring students attend school through:

- Sharing this policy
- Newsletters
- Our website
- Parental communications (texts / parent app / email etc)
- Parents evenings and Meet the Tutors events
- Academic Review Days
- Meetings and interviews

2

Parents/carers are required to contact the School on the first day of student absence before 8:30am, and each day of absence after this. Absence or lateness must be reported in one of three ways, always stating student name, year group and reasons for absence with [specific symptoms if ill](#):

- **On the Day:** Arbor Parent App ([by mobile](#)) or Arbor Online Parent Portal ([by website](#))
- **On the Day:** Voicemail on our Absence Line: 020 8315 8148
- **In advance with supporting evidence:** Email our Attendance Team: attendance@bishopjustus.bromley.sch.uk

If no contact is received, the Attendance Team will send an absent message to primary guardians confirming that the student has not registered at school and to immediately provide the reason for this absence. If no subsequent contact is received, first day calling will commence and our safeguarding team and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be notified if necessary.

Parents/carers are requested, wherever possible, to arrange any leave of absence within the school holiday periods and not during term time. The Department of Education provides legislation to schools which states that the Head Teacher may not authorise any holiday during term time ([working together to improve school attendance](#)). In exceptional

circumstances, requests should to be made using this [Exceptional Leave Request](#) form with full details of the intended dates of the absence and your exceptional reasons for making this request. This will be sent to the Head Teacher for consideration and the outcome will be shared with the parent/carer in advance of the intended dates. In normal circumstances, these requests should be sent at least 3 weeks in advance of the intended leave.

3. Monitoring of Attendance

Our Form Tutors are responsible for maintaining the form register and for monitoring individual attendance. Form tutors regularly review weekly data concerning the attendance and absence of students in their forms to effectively monitor and counsel students accordingly. They will highlight students to be recognised for good attendance and punctuality for awards and recognition. It is also their responsibility to check that all absences are accounted for and appropriately coded.

Our Year Teams regularly monitor attendance for their year group and follow up on absences that are a cause for concern. Year attendance targets are set and displayed in School and in Form rooms.

Persistence absence (missing more than 10% of school; equivalent to more than 19 days of learning and more than 95 lessons missed) is monitored and reviewed weekly in conjunction with the Year Teams. Intervention strategies are implemented immediately to raise attendance and address individual needs.

In addition, all students are responsible for monitoring their own attendance. Lessons such as Citizenship, assemblies and form sessions emphasise the importance of good attendance when seeking a place in Further Education or entry into a career. Good attendance and punctuality are recognised and rewarded throughout the year. Every effort is made to establish a mutually supportive relationship between home and School.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and key pastoral staff will monitor weekly attendance and lateness to consider appropriate intervention work with students or groups of students. Actions may include any or all of the following, dependent on circumstances:

- Lost learning time made up at the end of the day or week (workshop up to 1 hour)
- Counselling or mentoring for individual students
- Telephone conversation(s) with parents/carers (interpreters will be used for those parents/carers and students with English as an Additional Language (EAL))
- Letters or meetings with Year Team and parents/carers and other family members
- Referral to the Attendance Manager or Education Welfare Officer for home visits
- Letters or meetings with Head of Key Stage or Head Teacher, as appropriate
- Use of report card by Form Tutor to monitor attendance
- Use of Attendance Improvement Plan with Year Team to support attendance, such as agreed short-term reduced timetable to support with reintegration back to school
- Penalty Warning Notice by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) for unauthorised absence or frequent lateness
- Fixed Penalty Notices by the Local Authority for unauthorised absence or holiday taken in term-time which can lead to a fine per parent and per student
- Cases forwarded for prosecution by the Local Authority

If evidence of unauthorised absence is found, parents/carers are informed and given the opportunity to discuss the circumstances and the action to be taken. Students may be supported by the Year Team, or a staff member with whom they have a positive relationship, on the inherent risks of poor attendance including the adverse impact on their academic development.

The School will regularly share an attendance summary and expectation for each student with parents/carers to promote an active interest in their child's attendance at school and provide support where needed. The government expects students to attend for 190 days each year (equivalent to 38 weeks with 5 hours of lessons each day) and the impact of absence on percentage attendance is explained in this table:

Percentage	Days off	Weeks off	Hours missed
100%	0	0	0
95%	9	2	45
90% (Persistent absence)	19	4	95
85%	29	6	145
50% (Severe absence)	95	19	475

Absence

In the case of absences known in advance by parents/carers (e.g. medical treatment, funerals or religious observation) [prior written notification is required](#). Where the absence is due to a medical/dental appointment or operation, then evidence will be required and failure to do so may lead to the absence not being authorised.

Should any [leave of absence](#) be taken without notifying the School **and** obtaining authorisation from the Head Teacher, a Penalty Warning Notice will be issued and a Penalty Notice fine may be served. If a student fails to return from an agreed leave of absence and contact with the parent/carer has not been received, this will be reported to the local authority in line with the [Child Missing in Education \(CME\)](#) policy and protocols.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, home visits can be made even if we have received a notice of the absence, this is to fulfil our duty of care obligation.

Illness

It can be difficult deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell. The NHS provide guidance to help support this decision: [Is my child too ill for school?](#)

If your child is absent for 3 days or more, please consider whether to seek advice from a Pharmacist, book an appointment with a GP or contact the [NHS 111](#) service for support. When possible, parents/carers should send an email with the appointment confirmation or prescription to the Attendance Team (attendance@bishopjustus.bromley.sch.uk) to upload to the student's attendance record.

Where attendance levels are of concern and monitoring is in place, medical evidence will be required for all absences. This also applies to all students who are open to our Education Welfare Officer (EWO). If students are absent from school for medical reasons, the responsibility is on the parent/carer to provide evidence of illness not the School.

4. Monitoring of Punctuality

Morning registration is taken at 8.30am. We expect all students to be in class at this time. During registration, Form Tutors and subject teachers will record only present (yes), absent (no) or late (and minutes late).

Students that are late before 9.00am must arrive in school by the late desk gate and sign-in on the late screen before going to lesson. Their late marks will be written onto their attendance record, administered by the Attendance Team, and any lateness will be challenged. Where there is a legitimate reason, for example a medical appointment before school **and** the parent/carer contacts the School, then no further action is required. When there is no good reason, for example oversleeping, students will attend a 30-minute workshop after school.

All School gates are locked at 9.00am except the main entrance. Students that are late after 9.00am must arrive in school by the Main Reception and sign-in on the late screen before going to lesson. Their late marks will be written onto their attendance record, administered by the Attendance Team. Students arriving after 9am (roll call) will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code) for the AM session and will attend a 1-hour workshop after school. Students who are continually late after the register closes will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and parents may be issued with a Penalty Warning Notice.

5

5. Interventions and Legal Sanctions

Attendance concerns will be identified as early as possible in order to devise a strategic approach to raise the attendance of each student. The school attendance support team includes: (for each Year Group) Form Tutor, Year Coordinator, Learning Director, Assistant Head Teacher; and (for the School) Educational Welfare Officer, Attendance Manager and Assistant Head Teacher (allocated attendance champion). Parents are expected to support and monitor attendance on the [Arbor parent app](#) and inform the school if any support is required.

The school will offer regular advice and communication to identify and address attendance barriers. Support meetings will be held to create actions for student, parents/carers and the School. Multi-disciplinary support will be available to offer practical support for families to tackle the causes of absenteeism. Where voluntary support has not been successful, or not engaged with, the School will take forward the attendance concerns to legal intervention.

Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance there is a need to progress to legal intervention which often falls into three categories:

1. Formal support: A formation attendance contract agreed between the student, parent/carers, school and/or local authority. Progression to a legally binding Education Supervision Order in the Family Court if there is non-engagement and this is deemed appropriate
2. Attendance prosecution: Where all other routes have failed or not deemed appropriate the case may be considered for a penalty notice in line with the National Framework of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court
3. Statutory children's social care involvement: Where there are safeguarding concerns and an Education Supervision Order is not appropriate or has not been successful, the case should be considered for s.17 or s.47 statutory social care intervention

[Penalty Notices](#) will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time **and** the holiday has not been authorised by the school
- A student has accumulated at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (including lates after the register closes) in a 10-week rolling period and further unauthorised absence has occurred following a warning to improve attendance

Parents/carers may be issued with a [penalty notice](#) in relation to their child's unauthorised absence at school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996). Fines are issued per parent, per child. For the first offence, the penalty fine is £80 if paid within the first 21 days, with a further 7 days to pay the fine at £160. Failing to pay the penalty notice may result in the matter being taken to the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school.

6. Procedures and Strategies to support Good Attendance and Punctuality

Curriculum

Bishop Justus seeks to ensure that the curriculum (and its implementation) is engaging and motivating so that it meets the needs of individual students, therefore encouraging students to attend.

At Key Stage 4 an alternative curriculum may be offered if this better meets the needs of the student. All students are given full access to option choice at Key Stage 4, including vocational options. All students in Year 11 will continue their studies in Year 11 until the last exam.

The diverse programme of co-curricular activities on offer is used as a means of improving school attendance by enhancing a student's enjoyment and commitment to school with an aim to increase their sense of belonging.

Our staff refer to correlation between achievement and attendance in order to reinforce good attendance. Form Tutors play a key role in improving the attendance and punctuality of students within their form.

Time Management

Our school is open early from 7.30am to receive our students and the Library is open before school and at social times for reading and preparing for the next lesson.

We run a **breakfast service** for all in the dining hall (Bistro) from 7.50am to encourage early arrival and prepare our students for their day of learning.

Lateness is monitored by Form Tutors, Teachers and Year Teams. Interventions will be implemented if necessary to explore the barriers linked to avoidance and poor routines.

The School is in regular dialogue with the Local Authority and TFL transport providers where we advocate on behalf of our students for better public transport provision in our local area.

Rewarding Attendance

At Bishop Justus we find that our reward schemes for good (and improving) attendance and punctuality can itself improve overall attendance rates. The School expects excellent attendance and will always emphasise its importance to our students, parents/carers and our wider community.

Attendance is a key feature of the school reward system and good (and improved) attendance is recognised, praised and rewarded throughout the year. Friendly competition is built in to encourage collective responsibility and positive peer achievement and success. Achievable targets are set for individuals, forms and year groups on a half termly basis.

Types of Absenteeism and strategies

Persistent long-term absenteeism - A student who persistently does not attend school on a daily basis

- Systematic contact is maintained with home
- Involvement of the Attendance Manager and other external agencies, e.g. police, social services, medical, is always considered
- A planned meeting is arranged on a student's return to school and support strategies put in place, usually including a modified timetable

Irregular Absenteeism

- Possible patterns of non-attendance are identified
- The curriculum is examined for possible causes
- The effect of possible teacher absence is considered
- Causes such as extended weekends or training days are considered and targeted for extra vigilance

Internal truancy

- All students are registered for every lesson
- Students tempted to truant internally are encouraged to share problems with a member of staff through the pastoral and academic support systems

- Occasional spot checks on a specific period of the school day help to identify students who abscond from lessons

School Refusers

Identifying long term absence is the beginning of a long process. It is believed that punishing truants only reinforces negative feelings about school. It is acknowledged that long-term absence can lead to anxiety if contact is not maintained with the student. The principal outcomes are the improvement of self-esteem and successful reintegration into school life.

- The Attendance Manager and Year Team are always involved (along with other key family workers or pastoral staff). Where a student has SEND, a key worker or teaching assistant they may also be a point of reassurance and contact to help the student attend
- The student may be referred to external agencies as deemed appropriate
- The student is reintroduced gradually into the school through a variety of different strategies including personalised timetables and internal alternative provisions
- An achievable short-term target is set for attendance
- A trusted point of contact in school is established and special arrangements made at break and lunchtime
- Progress on attendance is reviewed regularly by the Form Tutor to take account of relapses and review the plans in place

At Bishop Justus we seek to educate the whole person, so that each child will be able to live 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

8

So that all can achieve- success through faith, love and learning.

Signed:



.....
Barry Blakelock

Head Teacher

7. Annex A: Supporting attendance through reintegration

At Bishop Justus School, we are committed to securing high levels of attendance for all pupils. In line with the Department for Education's [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) guidance, we believe that daily, face-to-face attendance is essential for pupils' academic, social and emotional development.

We therefore do not routinely send work home to students who are not attending school without a medically validated reason. This is a deliberate and research-informed approach based on the following principles:

Reinforcing the purpose of attendance

By not providing remote work in place of attendance, we reinforce the message that school attendance is not optional or replaceable. The school environment offers far more than academic content: it builds routines, social interaction, structure, and support from staff - none of which can be replicated remotely.

Supporting reintegration

Rather than facilitate continued absence by offering home learning, we prioritise reintegration planning. Our focus is on working collaboratively with families to:

- Identify and address barriers to attendance,
- Develop a personalised, graduated return plan where needed, and
- Offer in-school support, mentoring or pastoral provision to enable success.

Providing work at home may unintentionally reinforce disengagement and delay the return to school. Instead, we offer structured, supported reintegration pathways so students rebuild confidence and routine in a safe, consistent environment.

Working with families

We remain open, empathetic and supportive in our communication with parents. Where a student is facing difficulty, we always seek to:

- Engage in a Support Meeting with the family,
- Offer an Attendance Contract where needed, and
- Mobilise internal and external support teams, including our Educational Welfare Officer and pastoral staff.

We understand that time away from school for mental health reasons can be challenging, both for students and their families. During such absences, we do not routinely set formal work to be completed at home. This is in line with our approach to prioritise wellbeing and avoid adding further pressure during what can be a difficult time.

However, to help students remain connected with their learning in a manageable way, we signpost to a number of accessible online resources. These include the [curriculum section of our school website](#) and high-quality platforms such as [Oak National Academy](#), which can provide helpful content to tide students over while we work together to ensure the right support is in place.