BOURNE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Kindness Respect Determination

ATTENDANCE
and
REMOVAL FROM ROLL
POLICY

September 2023
Next review July 2024

Our Aims of the School:

- *To inspire and enable all to make a positive contribution to ourselves, our community and the wider society*
- *Pursue excellence in character and in learning*

Our Vision:

To be the best versions of ourselves

_Our Values__:_

All we do as a community is rooted in our three values

Kindness – a strength of the heart
Respect – a strength of the mind
Determination – a strength of the will

College Attendance Policy

"Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must help parents by providing services to support them, especially if the child's parents work" **Article 18 – UNCRC**

"Every child has a right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's human dignity. Wealthy countries must help poorer countries achieve this" **Article 28 – UNCRC**

''Poor attendance at school can have a hugely damaging effect, and children who attend school regularly are nearly four times more likely to achieve five or more good GCSEs than those who are regularly absent." (Department for Education).

Rationale

The College places a high value on regular and punctual attendance, the benefit it brings and how it is an expression of the College's vigilance, care and concern for its students' wellbeing.

Although it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their youngsters attend College, Bourne Community College will seek to support and maximise the attendance of its students.

The Policy links with and reflects the overall ethos of the College community and outlines the way the College will promote attendance and respond to poor attendance. The Policy is based on current legislation and guidance and takes into account the evidence required for inspections.

What is an acceptable attendance rate?

Attendance is a national priority. All schools must submit data electronically (both in an aggregated form and on an individual pupil basis) every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will be scrutinised by OFSTED. National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance rates and high examination performance. The vast majority of our students achieve over 96% attendance and this is what we expect from all of our students as a minimum. Our expectations are that a student is marked present for all ten sessions in a week. Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period; students should not have more than one or two periods of absence in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks due to absence are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school as part of our attendance protocols.
Please note: Attendance at the present time is even more pivotal as students missed so much education as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Encouraging Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility; parents, students and the school
By promoting a positive environment where students feel safe, known, respected and recognised, they will see the College as a positive experience.

This can be achieved by:-

- Students and staff following our Behaviour for Learning Policy which emphasises mutual respect and individual rights

- Students being known as named individuals and an interest shown in their lives both in and out of College
- Praising and reinforcing good behaviour, effort and achievement. Giving constructive feedback
- Viewing students as stakeholders in the College and their learning, involving them in the decision-making process or at the very least explaining why decisions are made on their behalf
- Providing a physical environment that is well kept, attractive, stimulating and safe
- A relevant and interesting curriculum
- Interesting lessons
- Autonomous, independent learning
- Curriculum, teaching and resources tailored to individuals' needs
- Providing appropriate support with personal, social and academic skills for individuals in need
- Helping students to re-integrate in terms of relationships and catching up with work following a long-term absence
- Ensuring parents, students, staff and the wider community understand the importance of regular attendance at College.
- Rewarding/Celebrating good attendance.

Staff Responsibilities for Marking Registers and Monitoring Attendance

- Form tutors have daily contact with their students in tutor groups when the register of attendance is taken using Bromcom
- The register is a legal document and is marked in accordance with guidelines from West Sussex County Council.
- Form tutors are alert to the development of erratic or poor attendance patterns in their registers
- Where concerns about attendance exist Form Tutors should raise these issues with their Leader of Year, Attendance Officer or Pupil Premium Officer.
- Attendance Officer meets regularly with the Leader of Year where patterns of attendance and punctuality are discussed. Where individual attendance/punctuality is presenting a concern, appropriate action will be decided.
- The College and Education Welfare Officer keep a number of students under review. Records are kept on these students.
- Subject staff must keep a register for every lesson using Bromcom and follow up punctuality issues. Absence concerns should be reported to Student Services.

How Authorised and Unauthorised is Categorised

- The register shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity, or absent
- If a student is absent the register must show every half day absence and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised –

Authorised Absences
School cannot legally authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Department for Education (DFE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:
(i)   a child is ill or receiving medical attention;
(ii)   days of religious observance, notified in advance;

(iii)   absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

There are other absences, such as approved sporting activities that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school; the Headteacher will use professional discretion in these cases to make a decision as to whether the absence can be authorised. The College uses codes to differentiate between different types of authorised absences in accordance with West Sussex County Council guidance.

Unauthorised Absences
These are absences where:
- • no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carers;
- • the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

- • Parents may not authorise an absence, only the College can do this.
- • If a student comes into College after 8.30 am or 1.35 pm when the registration period has closed then he/she is marked as unauthorised absent unless a note, e-mail or telephone message from parents is provided
- • **The College will not normally authorise more than two days absence for minor illnesses. Any further absence may be unauthorised unless a prescription, appointment card, a stamped pharmacy slip, a doctors note is produced, or other evidence as agreed by the attendance team on a case by case basis.**
- • All attendance is monitored. Regular days off ill may be challenged by letter and parents may be asked to provide medical evidence for any future absences. Lack of any medical evidence for these days off will lead to unauthorised absences which will then lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- • Fixed Penalty Notices may be pursued for 10 or more unauthorised absences in 10 weeks, including family holidays.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. These include:

- • Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- • Truancy before or during the school day
- • Absences which have never been properly explained
- • Students who arrive at school after 8.30am without good reason
- • Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- • Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised

This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings

If your child is reluctant to attend please do not cover for their absence but make immediate contact with the school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the student.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance is at 90% or below **for whatever reason.** Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to

any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co – operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

PA cases may be made known to the Local authority through Pupil Entitlement and may be subject to an Action Plan

College Procedures When Absences Occur

- Students leaving the College must report to Student Services and sign out with a member of staff. They must also sign in on return. Students must not leave the College site without the College giving prior permission. An appointment card or letter should be presented by the student before leaving the site unless an email or telephone call from a parent has been received in advance.
- If a student feels unwell during the school day they must speak to Student Services, who will make a decision as to what the next step should be and call home if necessary. For Health & Safety reasons students **are not permitted to call parents/carers themselves.** If a student is collected from school and the correct procedure has not been followed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If it is discovered that a student has left the College site without permission, the Leader of Year should be immediately advised. Parents should be informed, as soon as possible, that we are not certain of their son/daughter's whereabouts and therefore not in control of their safety.
- Medical or dental appointments should be made, wherever possible, outside of school hours. If this is not possible, students should produce their official appointment card when requesting permission to leave school or when signing in. If possible appointments should not affect registration so students can still get a present mark for both am and pm sessions
- The normal procedure for an un-notified absence is:-

a) If nothing is heard after 10 sessions (5 days) to explain an absence, the Attendance Officer should write to the parents/carers, asking for an explanation. The absence will be classed as unauthorised.

b) If no explanation for the absence is received and a child has not been seen for 10 school days, a follow-up letter is sent stating that if reasons for the absence are not received, they will be classed as a missing pupil. Pupil Entitlement will be notified.

c) The Education Welfare Officer and the Police Community Support Officer may be informed of unauthorised absences.

Staff Training on Attendance Issues

Staff receive regular training and staff development on attendance issues through:

- Whole College in-service training
- Tutor Team Meetings
- County and regional courses for individuals which are subsequently shared with other staff
- College circulars
- Education Welfare Service
- Government advice/circulars
- Research documents.

Parents' Legal Responsibilities Regarding Attendance and Punctuality

Parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their youngsters attend College regularly and punctually until the single school leaving date at the end of June in Year 11.
Parents are able to monitor attendance themselves using the MCIS parent app.

Requests for Leave of Absence

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and it is expected that parents help us by **not** taking your child away in school time. No holidays will be authorised in term time except in exceptional circumstances such as military leave; parents do not have the automatic right to take a child out of school for the purpose of a holiday. Any holiday taken, which has been declined and involves 10 or more sessions (5 days) will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) being issued and subsequent fine.
Any and all requests for leave of absence of any kind must be made at least two weeks in advance; request forms are available at Student Services.

Procedures for Parents when Absence Occurs

When a student is absent parents should contact the College before 8.30am on the first day of absence, using one of the following methods:

- Telephone the College – an answer machine is available
- Send a WhatsApp or text message to the school mobile
- Use e-mail
- Send a note in with a sibling.

When a student has a dental, hospital or other medical appointment parents should ensure that a note or appointment card is brought into College and shown to the tutor on the day prior to the appointment. If the student comes into College after the start of the College day having had a medical appointment then parents should ensure he/she brings in a note or appointment card explaining the absence.

First Day Contact Arrangements

In order to minimise unauthorised absence the College runs a first day contact scheme.

- Students are placed on this scheme when truancy is uncovered or as a joint strategy to improve attendance in consultation with the Pupil Entitlement Team
- The scheme is aimed at targeting those students whose attendance it is felt can be improved by this managed intervention
- The list of students on the first day contact register will be reviewed half termly by the Leaders of Year in consultation with the Assistant Head and the Attendance Officer and students' names will be removed when attendance has improved
- Where the scheme has completed its period and attendance has not improved referral will be made to Pupil Entitlement Team.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If students are late to registration they disrupt the Tutor's routine and can miss important information and news for the day. Similarly, arriving late to lessons is disruptive and can be embarrassing for the student.

How we manage Lateness
The school day starts at 8.25am and students are expected to go to their tutor when the bell rings.

Official registers are marked at 8.30am at the start of tutor time and at the start of lesson 5 in the afternoon.

Students arriving late, after 8:30am without good reason, are deemed to be late. They will be marked as 'L' (Late) and 'U' – (unauthorised) - if more than 20 minutes late.

In accordance with the regulations, students arriving more than 20 minutes late could potentially be referred for a Fixed Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Setting Work for Absent Students

- Work should only be set for students who are absent for more than two weeks and where professional guidance eg Doctor (GP), Consultant, Psychiatrist, Education Welfare Officer informs the College the child is unable to attend
- Work should be set until the child returns to College or the Local Education Authority provides Home Tuition. This will need to be reviewed on an individual basis where non-attendance continues over a four-week period from the commencement of setting work
- When staff are discussing the setting of work with parents an agreed period of "most likely" absence should be identified. When requesting work from subject staff the "most likely" period of absence should be indicated. Subject teachers should set one piece of extended work per subject appropriate to the period of absence. The student on their return should present this to the subject teacher for marking.

Arrangements for a Student's Return after Long-term Absence

Where students have had prolonged absence from College support will be given to the student to enable him/her to have a smooth return. The appropriate Leader of Year will hold a support meeting with the student and parents to identify an action plan of agreed strategies, which are appropriate to the needs of the students.

Rewarding Good Attendance

The College celebrates the importance of encouraging and recognising good attendance through its award system. It does this by:

- Celebrating high levels of attendance at Awards ceremonies
- Giving certificates to high and improving attenders and tutor groups
- Praise to individual students
- Letters of praise sent home
- Attendance figures published on student annual progress reports
- Awarding of positive points

High attendance levels are part of the student's records and make a meaningful contribution to their reference for further education or the world of work. Prospective Colleges of Further Education and employers view attendance and punctuality as important indicators of motivation/attitude and our records and references are very valuable evidence of reliability.

Procedures for Referral to Outside Agencies

Where attendance difficulties require further advice and support of outside agencies such as Child and Family Mental Health Service, Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Service etc., the appropriate member of College staff will liaise with parents in order to support students' needs.

Contacting different agencies requires different referral routes and parents will be advised of these.

Local Authority Pupil Entitlement

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance concerns together which is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the student to the Pupil Entitlement Team and an Investigating Officer may be appointed. He/she will review the attendance issues and work with the family and the school to try and improve attendance. Parents or students may wish to contact Pupil Entitlement Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Telephone number 03302 228200

Failure to improve attendance could result in legal action being taken. This could include prosecution of parents, Educational Supervision Orders and Fixed Penalty Notices. For further details please contact the Pupil Entitlement Team.

Pupil Entitlement Team is also responsible for issuing employment certificates. All students doing any work outside paid or unpaid needs an employment certificate.

Application forms can be obtained from the school. If attendance is not at a certain level, employment certificates will not be issued.

Emergency Procedures

- The College Receptionist will print registers at 9.00 am and 2.00 pm and take registers to the College Assembly Point in the event of an emergency
- Form Tutors will check the register against students present
- Registers will be returned to the College Receptionist and any issues reported.

Removal from Roll

Students of compulsory school age may only be removed from roll in the following circumstances:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local authority
- Completion of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion
- Death of the student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended family holiday within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which leave was granted, after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- In custody for more than four months
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the school and the Local authority have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student