

# The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College



## Attendance Policy



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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2. The whole school community – students, parent/carers, teaching/support staff and school Governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.
- 1.3. The policy is based on current Government and Local Authority Guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

## **2. School’s roles and responsibilities**

- 2.1. All staff (teaching and support) at The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2. The Headteacher at The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.
- 2.3. The Attendance Officer/Home-School Attendance Officer will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with relevant personnel; Students and parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good school attendance and data may be used to reinforce this. A report is prepared for the Governing Body on a regular basis. The Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and the Home-School Attendance Officer will ensure support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### **2.4. Registration**

- 2.4.1. The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once at the start of the afternoon session. Classroom teachers

are responsible for completing the attendance registers; the Attendance Officer adds prescribed codes for absence (Appendix A).

2.4.2. The register will be called promptly at 8.35am and 1:55pm by each class teacher, each Student will be called by name and a mark will be made in respect of each child.

2.4.3. The registers will close at 8.55am and 2.15pm. Any student who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Students who arrive late but before the register closes will be counted as present but will be given a late mark and dealt with under the school's current policy on punctuality and lateness.

## 2.5 Categorising absence

2.5.1 A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as having unauthorised absence, unless leave has been granted by the school in advance, or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school.

2.5.2 The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment and, attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College will then challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's parent/carer does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

2.5.3 If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within two weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised. Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:
  - a student is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority

- a student has been granted leave due to exceptional circumstances – in authorising such an absence, the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student’s overall pattern of attendance will be considered
- b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend or where medical evidence has been provided or where a previously diagnosed known medical condition exists. If a student’s attendance falls below 96% parents/carers will receive a letter advising that the school will no longer continue to authorise any absence due to illness without medical evidence unless a known previously diagnosed medical condition exists.
  - c) where the student has a medical appointment supported by an appointment card/hospital letter (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand)
  - d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family’s control, e.g. extreme weather conditions
  - e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong
  - f) the Local Authority provided transport for the student fails to arrive
  - g) other exceptional circumstances e.g. a family bereavement and for a very limited period.

2.5.4 Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- a) no explanation has been given by the parent
- b) the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- c) the student is staying at home to mind the house a relative or pet
- d) a shopping trip
- e) a birthday
- f) family holiday
- g) being unable to participate in a school activity e.g. school trip, activity day
- h) meeting relatives from/taking relatives to the airport

## 2.6 Class registers

In order to track students’ whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, class teachers will ensure all expected students attend each lesson. The school will endeavour to pick up any absences that occur during the day and will then take steps to locate the student.

## 2.7 Staff training

The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

## **3 Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headteacher and relevant school personnel.

3.2 Attendance is monitored for each student; where relevant, it is analysed and discussed with all appropriate parties.

3.3 The Data Manager will ensure attendance returns are made to the DFS within the stipulated time-frame.

## **4 Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College and is discussed at assemblies, meetings for parents and in Governor meetings. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences, within two weeks. Attendance staff endeavour to make contact with the families concerned.

4.3 First-day calling - The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be sent a text/email on the first day a student is absent without explanation, to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage Students who do not have a good reason for absence, or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

4.4 Meetings with parents - Where the school deems a student's level of attendance is becoming a cause for concern, in the first instance a letter will be sent home and if attendance then fails to significantly improve, without good reason, the parent/carers will be invited into school for an attendance meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans are put in place with the parents and the student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance.

4.5 Referral to the Missing Education and Child Employment Services (MECES) - if there continues to be unauthorised absences the matter will be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Services (MECES) who may issue a Penalty Notice or prosecute parent/carers.

- 4.6 Lateness and punctuality - Students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is not only very disruptive to their own education but that of others in their class, if they are late. Students who arrive after the register closes (see para 2.4) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the Student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as alarm did not go off, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with attendance concerns (see para. 4.4).
- 4.7 Persistent late arrival for school, before the register closes, will be followed up by a letter/meeting with those concerned and strategies will be suggested to improve the matter.
- 4.8 For health and safety reasons it is imperative that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late must, therefore, sign in on arrival at Student Reception. It is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure.
- 4.9 For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment) are collected from the Main Reception after signing out in student Reception. If a Student returns to school later in the day they must sign back in at student Reception.
- 4.10 Post-registration truancy - Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from school, having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. The school takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen by taking the register and noting attendance in lessons. If, however, a student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will endeavour to make contact with his/her parent/carers as soon as possible.

## 5 Leave of Absence Due to Exceptional Circumstances

- 5.1 The school discourages avoidable absences and as from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 changes in the Education Regulations 2006 Section 7 states that Headteachers may no longer grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. All leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances must be applied for via the school application form and at least three weeks in advance.
- 5.2 Family holidays **do not** come under exceptional circumstances and if a leave of absence is not authorised and the time is still taken, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the case may be referred to MECES who may issue a Penalty Notice or prosecute parent/carers.

## 6 Parent/carer responsibilities



6.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parent/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College.

6.2 The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College expects that parent/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College on the first day of absence; a telephone call with full reason for absence is sufficient in the first instance.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day.
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's attendance/punctuality.
- The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College will endeavour to support parents to address any concerns.
- Parents should confirm the reasons for any absence by sending in a letter, along with the relevant medical evidence, when the child returns to school, addressed for the attention of the Attendance Officer.

## **7 Student responsibilities**

7.1 All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to the Home-School Attendance Officer or their Pastoral Manager.

7.2 Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

7.3 Students also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

## **8 Conclusion**

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensure optimum academic progress which, in turn, will have a positive impact on qualifications and life chances.

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