Attendance Policy and Procedure

Policy Review & Update Process	
Member(s) of SLT responsible for update	Sarah Valero
Sub-Committee responsible for review	Buildings, Health and Safety
ISBA template policy?	Referenced

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CONTENTS

Key School contacts

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Aim

Bickley Park School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
- to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, reduce absence and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
- to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

Scope and application

This policy applies to the whole School [including the Early Years Foundation Stage [**EYFS**]].

This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.

Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- [*Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE, September 2023);]
- Education and Skills Act 2008;

- [Children Act 1989;]
- [Childcare Act 2006;]
- [Sponsorship Duties (UKVI, July 2023);]
- Education (Pupil Registration Regulations) 2006;
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (**UK GDPR**)

Publication and availability

This policy is published on the School website.

This policy is available in hard copy on request.

[This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.]

The importance of good attendance

The School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;

- the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;

- the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;

- that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and

- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

School responsibilities

The School acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the School community.

The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.

Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

Staff responsibilities

The Designated Senior Lead for Attendance (DSLA)

A senior member of staff of the School's leadership team as DSLA to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.

The DSLA's responsibilities are:

(a)   to formulate a clear vision for attendance improvement;

(b)   to evaluate and monitor expectations and processes;

(c)   to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and

(d)   to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance:

The staff identified in 0of this policy have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:

- have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon;
- seek explanations of absences required from pupils on their return from School;
- make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupil to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School;
- look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the DSLA of any specific concerns;
- inform the DSLA of any known future absences for pupils;
- deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;
- consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the School's behaviour and discipline policies; and
- discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance .

All staff

The School ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it.

The School provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

School arrangements

The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. Contact details of relevant staff can be found at the front of the policy and other details about the School's arrangements can be found in Appendices 0-0.

Monitoring attendance

The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include::

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- benchmark attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data; and
- monitor the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented
- Protocols such as, a sequence of events flow-chart and proactive communication mitigate concerns about low attendance and ensure events proceed smoothly. See Appendix 4 - Attendance Protocols.

Pupil responsibilities

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The School therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance.

Pupils should be aware that:

- they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each School day;

- they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;

- they should not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with School rules;

- they should engage with the School's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;

- any unexplained absence will be followed up;

- persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School. This may take the form of:

  (e)   offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;

  (f)   communication with parents;

  (g)   reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and

  (h)   sanctions against them or their parents in line with the School's behaviour policies.

- If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending School or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the School encourages them to speak to their Form Tutor or those staff identified in 0 in the first instance. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

Additional needs

The School recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The School will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that affects their ability to attend School regularly.

It will also work with parents , and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupils education, health and care plan is accessed.

Suitable strategies will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the School's control, the School will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

Parent/ carer responsibilities

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

This means pupils must attend every day that the School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the School.

The School will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.

Expectations the School places on parents can be found in 0 of this policy

Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.

Training

Staff: The School ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and
- the School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.

Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This should include:

- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;

- the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data; and

- any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

The School maintains written records of all staff training.

Information sharing

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to Government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

Record keeping and confidentiality

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.

Appendix

Appendix 1

School arrangements

Managing attendance

The School monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance and as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils and promote attendance it accurately completes admission and attendance registers as is required as set out in Appendix0 and Appendix0 respectively.

The School expects all pupils to be present at School for the whole of the School day.

Teaching Staff are responsible for completing Attendance Registers. They must be completed accurately and promptly according to the guidelines. Completed registers must be entered into Engage before 8:45am and again before 1.30pm in the Pre-Prep and 1:50 pm in the Prep Departments. All registers must be taken and recorded in Engage by these deadlines without exception. The school office must be advised by Teachers of any children marked as present in the morning and who are not present for afternoon registration.

 Y3-8 registers will be checked by secretarial staff between 8.45am and 9.45 am and again the following morning. The Head of Music will ensure that weekly music timetables are published on school iPads for all staff to refer to. The school Secretary's already receive details of sports fixtures and school trips which may affect afternoon registration**: they should also be informed of any other occasions when pupils will not be present for registration. The Prep Department Matrons will inform the Secretaries of any children in their care at both registration times.

If, when the Secretarial staff are checking the registers, they find an unexplained absence, the office will initially check with the teacher on their timetable and then the parents of the child concerned will be phoned to establish his whereabouts. If none of the contacts can be reached, messages are to be left and an email sent. A note should be left on the Engage register confirming the action taken. Teachers should forward on any absence emails or verbal communication to the school office in case the parent has not left a note on Engage.

Prep Department parents must alert school via the Engage App if a child is absent, giving reasons why. The school Secretaries have access to this information via email, which is linked to the registers and shows as an absence icon. The Office will acknowledge absence messages via email, on the same day of receipt.

*On games and options days, the lunch time registers are collected by the office from Matron and used to update Engage if paper registers are not received by the office by 2pm.

**Teachers must ensure that registers are either taken during registration or paper registers completed and passed onto the office prior to departure.

 Pre-Prep registers will be checked by the Pre-Prep Secretary between 9.00 and 9.15am and between 1.30 and 1.45pm. If, when the Pre-Prep Secretary is checking the registers, she finds an unexplained absence, parents of the child concerned will be phoned to establish his whereabouts. Pre-Prep Department parents must alert school via Engage if a child is absent, giving reasons why.

The Pre-Prep Secretary, who have access to this information via email, will inform the form tutors accordingly.

 If a member of staff takes a pupil, group or class out of school they are responsible for informing parents and staff at the school office in advance.

 It is the responsibility of parents to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of the day.

 If a parent takes a pupil out of school during the day, they must sign them out at the Woodlawn office (or The Lodge, if sent home by Matron). The school office signs the pupil out using the Sign Out App and a note added to Engage. In case of any system errors paper sign out registers are updated alongside Engage.

 It is the responsibility of Governors to ensure they are aware of the school's procedures and to challenge / support the school in its review of this policy.

Reporting duties

The School has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attendance their absence is unauthorised. The School must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.

In the event that a pupil holding a Student or Child Student visa sponsored by the School under the Points Based System goes missing, the School will report to UKVI if the pupil misses ten consecutive expected contact points.

Each time the School's attendance register is completed it is treated as a contact point for these purposes.

The report will be made by the School's Level 1 user via the Sponsor Management and in accordance with prevailing UKVI guidance]

Action will also be taken in accordance with the Missing child policy and safeguarding and child protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Appendix 2

Admission register

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the School will:

- maintain an admission register of pupils admitted to the School (also known as the school roll); and
- inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points.

The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school they last attended.

Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the School must provide it with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
- the ground (prescribed in regulation 8) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Appendix 3

Attendance register

Attendance of compulsory school-aged pupils is recorded and monitored in accordance with the statutory requirements and the School has adopted the national codes system to enable it to monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations.

The attendance of pupils and of non-compulsory school age will be recorded in the same way to so attendance can be monitored, unexplained absences are investigated and the School can ensure their safety and welfare.

The School will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.

The School is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:

- present;

- absent;

- attending an approved educational activity;

- unable to attend school due to an exceptional circumstance.

Recording absence

Absence will be recorded as set out in 0 and 0 below using national absence codes correlating to:

- authorised absence;

- excluded (while still on the admission register);

- holiday authorised by the school;

- illness;

- medical or dental appointments;

- religious observance;

- study leave;

- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence.

Authorised absence from school

All applications for an authorised leave of absence from school should be made with reasonable notice and addressed to the Headmaster.

Only exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and the relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head to determine the length of the time the pupil is authorised to be away from school.

Absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request a for this type of leave of absence in advance.

Remote education

The School is required to record all absence from in-person lessons.

The School may, in limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils, who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the School site, to keep pace with their education.

In the limited circumstances when the School decides to use remote education for individual pupils when they are absent, the following will be considered:

- ensuring mutual agreement of remote education by the School, parents or carers, potentially pupils, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional. If the pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision;

- if remote education is being used as part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, putting a formal arrangement in place to review its efficacy regularly, alongside identifying what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help ease the pupil back to school at the earliest opportunity;

- setting a time limit within which the period of remote education provision should be reviewed, with the aim that the pupil returns to in person education with the required support in place to meet their needs.

There is no specific code for remote education and in these circumstances the attendance code used will be "authorised absence". Separate records will be maintained to monitor a pupil's engagement with this activity and plans for their reintegration to class.

Bickley Park School will utilise a digital education platform that will be kept up-to-date and keep pupils safe. Staff will remain trained and confident in its use.

Bickley Park School will maintain pages on its website that provides information and guidance about the remote education provision and links to any trusted external education websites.

Bickley Park School has an established remote education plan in place which is reviewed at least annually in consultation with staff.

Unauthorised absence

The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate. Examples include:

- holiday has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Head;

- the reason for absence has not been provided;

- a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;

- a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

Appendix 4

Attendance Protocols

Trigger

Attendance below 90%
(based on first report
percentages)

Stage 1

E-mail from Pastoral Manager

Improvement in attendance

Continue to monitor.

No improvement in attendance

Ongoing concerns

Stage 2

PDF Letter from Designated Senior Lead
for Attendance

No improvement in attendance

Persistent concerns

Stage 3

Meeting with Headmaster and
Designated Senior Lead for Attendance