

S22 ATTENDANCE POLICY

Responsible:
Approved by Access Committee:
Next Review:

The Principal
March 2017
March 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

The Bushey Academy aims to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Our aim is for 100% attendance and punctuality for every student. The Governors, Principal and staff recognise the challenge in this aim and, therefore, have set our expectation that each student should achieve a minimum attendance percentage of 96% throughout the school year. Our intention is to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We believe that good academy attendance assists children and young people to achieve the following 5 outcomes:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy their learning and achieve to the best of their academic potential
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 The academy is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the academy is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

3. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Parents of The Bushey Academy students are responsible for ensuring that their child attends the academy regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped, and in a fit condition to learn. Parents are also responsible for informing the academy at once of the reason for any absence by phone, letter or personal visit. The academy, in turn, will inform parents should their child not attend the academy as expected, without a prior reason having been given.

3.2 All students of The Bushey Academy are expected to attend the academy and all of their lessons regularly and punctually; they should come with appropriate equipment, in correct academy uniform, and in a fit condition to learn. Students who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered support from their form tutor and Head of House, and, if the need should arise, from the

academy's attendance coordinators and where necessary the County AIO. The relevant staff will work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality continue to give cause for concern.

4. ACADEMY PROCEDURES

4.1 Registration

4.1.1 The academy will ensure that the Department for Education nationally agreed codes for registration are correctly used. The electronic SIMS system will be used by staff for this purpose, or an interim paper registration in the event of other unforeseen circumstances.

4.1.2 All subject teachers will take registers consistently in each of their lessons and the academy's attendance coordinators will follow up absences as soon as possible, in line with Department for Education guidelines.

4.2 Morning Registration

4.2.1 Students should be in the academy by 8:30am.

4.2.2. The morning registration is taken promptly at 8.35am during form time.

4.2.3 Registration will close at 8:45am. Students who are not in morning registration will be marked on the register as 'absent' by their form tutor, and this absence will remain unauthorised until the academy has confirmed the reason, usually in the form of a subsequent note or telephone call from the parent or carer.

4.2.4 Students who arrive in the academy after 8.45am should sign in using the school's Inentry system; this will automatically update SIMS and will be monitored by the attendance coordinators. These students will be marked on the register as late, with a cut off time of 9:30am.

4.2.5 A student who, through no fault of their own, arrives late due to a problem with school transport or other legitimate and unavoidable circumstances, will not be penalised for lateness.

4.3 Afternoon Registration

4.3.1 The afternoon registration is taken during the period 6 lesson.

4.4 Authorised/Unauthorised Absences

4.4.1 Parents are reminded that it is the academy that authorises an absence, not the parent. The Bushey Academy will decide how an absence is to be recorded, utilising the Department for Education guidance. The Bushey Academy attendance coordinators will adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. An absence can be **authorised** if:

- the student has a leave of absence authorised by the academy. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence (see section 4.7) - Code C.
- the student is excluded but no alternative provision has been made - Code E.
- the student has an illness (not medical or dental appointments) - Code I. The academy will authorise these unless there is genuine concern about the veracity of an illness, in which case the academy will consider requesting medical evidence to support illness. If the academy has doubts about the authenticity of any illness, the absence can be recorded as unauthorised, but the parent / carer will be informed of this intention.
- the student has a medical or dental appointment – Code M. However, the academy will encourage parents / carers to make appointments out of academy hours.
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong – Code R.
- the student is known to be a member of a traveller family who travel for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the academy – Code T.

4.4.2 Absence will be **unauthorised** if:

- the reason for absence has not been provided, or the academy is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence – Code 0 (nb that registers are, initially, likely to have a recording code of N - this can then change to Code 0 in the above circumstances.)
- the student is away on a family holiday that has not been authorised in advance by the Principal, or is in excess of the period agreed – Code G.

4.4.3 Students and parents / carers are to be made aware of examples that will be considered as unauthorised absences, in order to help them fully appreciate how to avoid a Code of 0 - examples could include:

- the student stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings
- the student is involved in inappropriate leisure activities (eg shopping during academy (hours)
- the student is absent for an unexceptional special occasion (eg a birthday or day excursion)

4.4.4 The following administrative codes are also used by the academy, as outlined in Department for Education guidelines:

- Code X: not required in school
- Code Y: unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Code #: planned whole or partial school closure

4.5 Leaving and Returning to the Academy during School Day

When pupils leave or return to the academy during the school day for any reason they must sign in/out at Student Services. Students should provide an appointment card or note from their parent, stating reasons for absence.

4.6 **Truancy**

The Bushey Academy works with parents, students and staff to reduce truancy. The Student Behaviour Policy outlines that the academy will use its sanction system where appropriate as part of the intervention strategy to deal with truancy and prevent its continuation.

4.7 **Target Setting**

The Bushey Academy sets a target for the total number of pupils who are persistently absent expressed as a percentage of the total in accordance with Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 2972, The Education (Local Education Authority Performance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007.

‘Persistently Absent’ means absent for any reason or combination of reasons for a number of sessions that totals at least ten percent of the national average of sessions available in the statistical reporting period.

4.8 **Attendance Off-site**

The following are recorded as present:

Code B: Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Code D: Dual registered – at another educational establishment

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

Code V: Educational visit or trip

Code W: Work experience

4.9 **Holidays**

In accordance with amendments made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, The Bushey Academy is no longer able to authorise any holiday requests during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Principal to decide what constitutes exceptional circumstances. The Principal will determine the number of school days a student can be away from the academy if leave is granted. Requests for leave should be made in writing to The Principal.

4.10 **Procedures for following up absence**

- If a student is absent, parents will be contacted as part of our First Day Calling Programme. In most cases for this purpose the school uses an automated calling system which contacts parents via their mobile telephone.
- Heads of House, pastoral leaders, attendance coordinators and the AIO (Attendance Improvement Officer) meet regularly to discuss attendance. Students causing concern are discussed and appropriate action taken according to academy policy. AIO intervention will involve parental engagement.

- Absence notes received from parents will be initialled by the form tutor where appropriate and sent to the Attendance Office as soon as possible. All telephone messages are recorded.

4.11 **Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

- The Bushey Academy will offer an environment in which students feel valued, welcomed and safe. The academy's ethos must demonstrate that students feel that their presence in school is important and that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- The academy will be proactive in highlighting, for all students and parents, the link between good attendance and successful academic outcomes. The academy will seek to utilise all available opportunities to highlight this link, including during assemblies, form time, DCP reports, consultation evenings, Governor Attendance Panels and other forms of communication.
- The academy will run regular attendance focus programmes during the course of the academic year, and students with concerning attendance will have meetings with form tutors / other staff, which will focus on target setting to address the concerns. There will be regular communication with parents during this target setting process.
- Good attendance will be celebrated and, where appropriate, rewarded in line with academy policy. Awards assemblies are held termly and these are designed to celebrate high levels of attendance.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils as appropriate. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to students' needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly checked and analysed by the attendance coordinators /Heads of House / pastoral leaders in order to identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice.
- The Heads of House, attendance coordinators and pastoral leaders will, when appropriate, liaise with outside agencies – eg AIO, BST, Children's Services - and agree suitable actions as part of integrated working. Students who have safeguarding concerns will be carefully tracked in terms of attendance data, and prompt intervention planned.
- Visits will be made to Primary feeder schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible secondary transfer. Discussions with primary school teachers will seek to identify those pupils who may require extra support with attendance during this process.
- The Principal will include attendance matters in his reports to the Governing Body and Academy Trust.

5 PENALTY NOTICES

At The Bushey Academy we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions unauthorised absence in the current and / or previous term (including unauthorised holidays) the Principal may ask the LEA to issue a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

6 WORKING WITH THE ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT OFFICER (AIO)

- The Bushey Academy works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual students and the whole school.
- The Heads of House, attendance co-ordinators, and pastoral leaders meet the AIO on an agreed schedule.

References

School Attendance: Department for Education advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (October 2014)

The Education Act 1996

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013