



MARK RUTHERFORD SCHOOL

“.....providing a range of experiences for all our students which will encourage them to develop their full potential and equip them to become lifelong learners.”

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

**Ms K Hughes
Deputy Head**

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

We believe that we can improve the life chances of **ALL** students by ensuring that **ALL** staff, students (including Sixth Form), and parents/carers are aware of the importance of and take responsibility for regular attendance and punctuality.

Creating a Positive environment.

We believe that students will want to attend regularly if they are in a learning environment which is caring and supportive and which promotes respect for all. Learning opportunities are varied and focused on individual needs of students. Lessons are well planned, resourced and imaginative and are delivered with pace, providing opportunities for challenge and engagement and which meet students' needs in terms of differentiation and learning styles.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy aims:

1. To ensure we maximise the potential of all students through promoting full time attendance and punctuality.
2. To recognise the needs of the individual students when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence, through the schools fortnightly inclusion panel.
3. To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at the school in line with agreed targets.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to students and carers through effective use of the Education Welfare Service.
5. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions (See school behaviour policy and rewards and incentives policy) that aim to help the school to manage behaviour, promote positive behaviour and encourage good attendance and punctuality.
6. To make attendance and punctuality a priority with staff/parents/carers/students/governors.

The Law and DFES guidelines on whole school attendance

“By law all children of compulsory school age (between 5-16) must have a proper full time education”. **Parents and Carers are responsible for making sure that this happens**, either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide an effective education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states “if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at that school, his parent is guilty of an offence”.

If your child does not attend the school at which he/she is registered regularly, the local education authority can take legal action against you. This can result in criminal proceedings. The courts can impose a fine on each parent or carer of up to £2500 for each child not attending school and/or impose a 3 month prison sentence. As a parent or carer you would then have a criminal record. The school also has the power under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act of 2003 to ask the education authority to impose a £50 penalty (£100 if not paid within 28 days) for unauthorised absences and ultimately may seek a parenting order through the court.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME (as of January 2017)

No term time holidays will be authorised.

If your child's attendance-

- Was above 95% last year and is currently 95% or better

The term time holiday **will not be authorised**, and a Fixed Penalty Warning letter, may be issued.

If your child's attendance –

- Was below 95% at the end of last year and currently is below 95%

The term time holiday **will not be authorised** and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

We know that from analysis of our school results that attendance and attainment are linked. We recognise that exceptional circumstances take place and we acknowledge that applications for leave during term time may be made. Individual circumstances will be looked at and exceptional circumstances will be considered.

Any applications for exceptional leave in term time will need to include an application to explain the circumstances in taking your child out of school during term time.

The following Bedford Borough link offers parents information about leave of absence in term time:

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/education_welfare_service/school_attendance_and_the_law/leave_of_absence_in_term_time.aspx

Statutory Registration

When a child attends school there is a legal requirement that ensures that every child is marked in by a register during tutor in the morning and during lesson 5 (the afternoon session).

Members of staff failing to register students correctly will:-

- Receive regular reminder memos from the schools attendance officer.
- Repeated failure to complete registers > 5 occasions, staff members will receive formal letter with copy to file.
- Continued repeated failure could result in verbal warning and discipline procedures.

School Responsibilities

Only a school can decide whether an absence is authorised

Authorised Absence is defined as when the school has given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be absent, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. Remember, parents do not authorise absence.

An unauthorised absence is when a student is absent from class or school without a satisfactory explanation.

An Unauthorised Late is when a student arrives to school after the register has closed, which is 30 minutes after the school day starts.

Leaving the schools grounds during the day

This is strongly discouraged except in cases of emergency. Any students leaving the school during the school day must obtain permission from a teacher, ideally their Head of House, first. Students wishing to leave the site at lunch time must have written permission to go home. Students who go home for lunch are encouraged not to congregate around the local shops. No Students are allowed to leave the site at morning break. If a student leaves site without permission, this may result in a sanction being set.

If a Student is ill, they must always tell a teacher and they will refer them to Student Reception where their condition will be reviewed. Parents will always be contacted prior to the School sending a Student home.

Parents are requested not to collect students who have phoned them unless otherwise contacted by the school. In any case of doubt please contact the school.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance when necessary.

To help in this, if your child is absent from school, you must:

- Telephone the school on **(01234) 290200** and leave a message on the Absence Hotline everyday of absence. This is to safeguard all of our students.

Parents should avoid making non-urgent dental/medical appointments during the school day. If a student is late due to an appointment they will receive an authorised absence mark for the whole session unless they have attended morning registration at 8.30am.

A student who arrives late due to such an appointment, or who needs to leave during the school day for an appointment, will need a letter or phone call from home for the school to be able to authorise the absence and the student **MUST** sign out at Student Reception. Students **MUST** sign in at Student Reception upon their return. We would encourage students to register in school prior to any medical appointment to get their attendance mark.

Punctuality

Students should arrive for morning registration by 8.30am, (9.20am on a Tuesday). If a Student arrives after this point they will be marked late. The registers will be closed at 9.00am and after this point the Student will receive an unauthorised absence mark, unless they are late due to an authorised absence, i.e. medical appointment.

If a Student is late they will be given a detention on the same day for 30 minutes. If they do not attend the detention then increases to 60 minutes the following day. Parents will be notified via email and text message as to whether the student has a detention. Students are expected to know that they have a late detention if they arrive after the 8.30am/9.20am bell. A slip will be sent to inform the of the detention at some point during the day. However, this is not mandatory.

Failure to attend this detention will result in staying for Parallel Pathway on the following

day.

We encourage good punctuality by ensuring students are rewarded in line with the School's Reward Policy with regular attendance/punctuality rewards assemblies. Persistent late students will be subject to a personalised punctuality plan through their house office. (This is currently under review and subject to change).

Truancy

Truancy is when a student absents himself or herself from school without good reason and without permission from home or school. This will be dealt with by a sanction and recorded on the Schools Behaviour Log.
(see Trauncy Protocol Appendix)

COLLUDED ABSENCE

If a parent or carer deliberately allows their child to be absent from school, without good reason, then they are colluding with their child's absence from school. This will be coded as an unauthorised absence and may result in:

- 1) A referral to the Education Welfare Service
- 2) Parents/Carers to provide medical evidence for all absences
- 3) Fixed penalty notice £60 per parent
- 4) Prosecution through the Magistrates Courts

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL DO ABOUT POOR ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Clearly absence from school is a major concern as it impacts very directly on the achievement and attainment of students. Whilst there have been improvements in attendance and punctuality the school's system for monitoring it, there is no room for complacency.

We operate a system where if attendance falls to less than 95% over a 4 week period the Tutor will discuss this with the student and if possible alert parents during an Academic Mentoring session. If attendance then falls below 92% an Expression of Concern Letter is issued. Students and parents will normally then meet with a member of the team to consider what support we can offer to improve your child's attendance. If attendance falls below 90% a fixed penalty warning letter may be issued, requesting medical evidence for absences. Failure to provide evidence may result in a £60 penalty charges per parent and a possible referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Within the school we have a number of staff that will help support this process and deal with attendance and punctuality issues. The School Attendance Officer is the first point of contact for ALL parents and carers when their child is absent. Parents will be contacted via email and text message if no reason for absence is provided that morning. Where we have concerns about attendance or punctuality these will be addressed fortnightly through meetings with the student's Head of House, the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer, and it is at these meetings that persistent absentees (any students with attendance below 90%) are identified and support is put in place.

Clearly any support which is put in place can only be successful with the parent or carer's support and we are keen to work with parents and carers to maintain a high level of attendance. It is therefore vital that concerns are addressed early so that they can be dealt with.

In order to support this policy these are the key actions:

1. A well developed school improvement attendance action plan to prioritise the reduction in students with high levels of absence.
2. To reduce the gap in poor attendance between students that are disadvantaged (Pupil Premium) and the rest of the school (non Pupil Premium).
3. To ensure there are systems and structures in place to ensure that students stay on site all day.
4. Ongoing individual support for students identified with high level of school absence.

Appendix 1

Punctuality and Truancy

Appendix 2

Request for Leave of Absence Application Form

Appendix 3

Pupil Profile

Appendix 4

Timings of the School Day

Appendix 5

Penalty Notice

Revisions to Punctuality and lateness for September start

To improve Consistency of sanctions for lateness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late list will then be generated by the Attendance Officer and will include tutor lates and signed in lates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students that arrive at any point after the late bell at 8.30a.m will be marked late by the tutor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All marked late students will receive same day detention for 30 minutes • Failure to attend will result in 60 minutes the following day • Failure to attend 60 minutes will result in referral to Parallel Pathway in addition to the school day • Failure to attend a Parallel pathway in addition to the school day will result in Parallel pathway only followed by a readmission meeting • Repeated referral to Parallel Pathway will result for failure to attend late detention (> 3 every half term) will move to stage 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors to attend Friday briefing with their HOH and feedback on Lateness using an agreed pro-forma, location TBA
To reduce persistent lates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1- students that are late more than 2 x in a two week cycle will be spoken to by their tutor and a phone call made to home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 – no improvement and 2 or more lates in another two week cycle • TUTOR/HOH meet with parents and discuss a plan moving forward, this could include- Home school agreement discussion/ lateness report / PSP started / attendance agreement Detentions to take place at lunch time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 3 – no improvement at half term Parental meeting to involve HOH and LG link Personalised support discussed and put in place Change to start of day and end of day Completion of an EHA

(This is currently under review, and may be subject to change)



APPENDIX 2

SCHOOL NAME: MARK RUTHERFORD SCHOOL

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR YOUR CHILD DURING TERM-TIME

Time off school for family holidays is not a right and as a Parent/Carer, you should complete this form and return it to your child's school **AT LEAST FOUR (4) WEEKS** before the date when you want the period of absence to start. You maybe required to attend an interview to discuss this request with the Headteacher or other senior member of staff and/or produce supporting evidence for your request.

(A separate application must be completed for each child)

Child's Full Name:

Date of Birth.....Year Group.....Class/Form

Address.....

Period of Absence: From..... To.....(inclusive)

Reason Requesting Absence (if request is for a family holiday, please give exceptional circumstances on why it **MUST** be in term time)

Name:..... Relationship to child:.....

Signed:..... Date:.....

Schools may agree up to 10 days 'holiday leave' in special circumstances such as

- *For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupils education*
- *When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.*

If you have other children in the family of school age please give details

Name

D.O.B. School Attended.....

Name

D.O.B. School Attended.....

Name

D.O.B. School Attended.....

Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time Return Slip

To: Parent/Carer: an appointment has been made with

to discuss this request on date& time.....

Permission has / has not been granted for

to be absent from school for..... days fromto..... (inclusive).

Reasons given (if appropriate)

Signed:..... Date:.....

Headteacher/Head of House **Please Note:** *Holiday absences which have not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised absences and may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.*

APPENDIX 3

Pupil Profile (Example)

Pupil Name:

Pupil identified as having high unauthorised absence in 2008/2009

Pupil identified as having high absence in: Autumn Term 2008
Spring Term 2009
Summer Term 2009

Date profile completed: By: A HENDERSON Role: ATTENDANCE OFFICER

The Pupil Perspective. <i>Reasons given for high authorised/unauthorised absence</i>		
Specific patterns of absence		
Analysis of attendance data for previous 12 months. (attach print out where possible)	Sessions missed AA	
	Sessions missed UA	
Recurring Half days		
Subject areas		
Other trends		
Pupil attitude and approach to learning / specific needs		
Possible issues preventing attendance e.g. family situation, educational history, attendance history, current school concerns additional to attendance, knowledge of any support agencies currently working with the pupil.		
Considered solutions to improve attendance.		
Action to be undertaken		
TUTOR <input type="checkbox"/>	SUBJECT TEACHER <input type="checkbox"/>	INCLUSION <input type="checkbox"/>
SSA/HOH/AO <input type="checkbox"/>	EWO <input type="checkbox"/>	

APPENDIX 4

TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Admission to School	8.15am
Registration + Tutor Time	8.30 - 8.55
Period 1	8.55 - 9.55
Period 2	9.55 - 10.55
Break	10.55 - 11.15
Period 3	11.15 - 12.15
Period 4	12.15 - 1.15
LUNCH	1.15 – 1.55
Period 5 (incl. PM Registration)	1.55 – 2.55
Library study	3.05 - 4.00 (3.30pm Friday)

Tuesday A & B Academic Mentoring:

Arrive in school by 9.20am for first lesson. You should register in that lesson unless you have an appointment with your tutor or you have a prior arrangement with a teacher.

APPENDIX 5



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

BEDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL AUTHORITY

PENALTY NOTICE

CODE OF CONDUCT

RATIONALE

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In law an offence occurs if a parent* fails to secure a child's attendance at school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Parents are supported by school, Local Authority Services and Partner Agencies to overcome barriers to regular attendance.

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated Local Authority (LA) Officers, Head Teachers (& Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. Penalty Notices (Sections 444A & 444B) supplement the existing sanctions to enforce attendance at school currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.

The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to requirements of the Human Right Act 1998 and all other Equal Opportunities legislation.

The LA has the prime responsibility for developing a protocol within which all partners named in the Act will operate and has responsibility for the overall administration of the Penalty Notice Scheme.

This local code sets out the procedures and terms under which Penalty Notices can be issued in Bedford Borough. Authorised persons should issue Penalty Notices in compliance with this code in order to ensure that the powers are consistently applied.

PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING PENALTY NOTICES

Bedford Borough Education Welfare Service, in consultation with schools (and other agencies where appropriate) will be responsible for the decision to issue Penalty Notices. This will ensure consistency in the delivery of the

scheme; avoid school-home conflicts and ensure that the Penalty Notices are not being issued when the process towards court prosecution has already started. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will receive requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools, the police and neighbouring LAs. These requests will be considered provided that:

- all relevant and evidential information is supplied
- the circumstances of the pupil's absence meets the requirements of this protocol
- the issuing of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies or other enforcement sanctions already being processed
- the requirements of the cross border protocols are met

The EWS will respond to all requests within 10 working school days of receipt and where all criteria are met will:

- give a formal written warning to the parent* of the possibility that a Penalty Notice will be issued
- in the same letter, where relevant, set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence
- issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved

CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of **unauthorised** absence.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate:

- when the pupil has taken holiday during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school, providing the school has taken into account government and LA guidance to inform its decision making
- following a Truancy Patrol when the school has recorded the absence of the pupil as unauthorised
- in the early stages of intervention where the School or EWS believes that the sanction will lead to an improvement in attendance, e.g. persistent late arrival at school; parents failure to attend/co-operate at a parenting contract meeting

In the case of poor attendance the use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per pupil in an academic year. If more than 1 parent* has parental responsibility, both parents will receive a Penalty Notice (i.e. 1 per parent per child). In situations where there is more than one pupil in a family with irregular school attendance, multiple Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parents during the year. However, this action must be subject to careful consideration and co-ordination. There will be no restriction on the number of

times a parent may receive a warning on the possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

If the penalty notice is being issued for unauthorised leave of absence (coded in the register with G) then a penalty notice can be issued for each period of leave of absence during an academic year. Subject to the criteria below.

To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices, the following criteria will apply:

- at least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the last 12 school weeks
- except in cases of unauthorised leave of absence or exceptional circumstances, the parent* will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being given and a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement.

PROCEDURE FOR WITHDRAWING PENALTY NOTICES

A Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- when it has been issued to the wrong person
- when the use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this protocol
- it contains a material error
- Not paid, and the LA has not and does not intend to instigate proceedings.

PAYMENT OF PENALTY NOTICES

The arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the Notice (a notice served by post is deemed to have been received on the second day after posting it by first class post).

The LA will retain any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs.

Non payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the immediate prosecution of parents* under the provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 unless;

- The notice was materially defective
- The Local Authority has not started legal proceedings and has no intention of doing so

POLICY AND PUBLICITY

The deployment of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Authority's Attendance Strategy. **All school Attendance policies should include information on the deployment of Penalty Notices which should be brought to the attention of parents.** The LA will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional information material.

REPORTING AND REVIEW

The Education Welfare Service will report at regular intervals on the deployment and outcomes of the use of Penalty Notices. The Service Annual Report will include information and analysis of the use of the Notices.

A review of the deployment of the Penalty Notices will be undertaken at regular intervals and the strategy amended as appropriate.

*Definition of a parent

Section 576, Education Act 1996 defines a parent as:

- all natural parents, whether named or not
- any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in Children Act 1989) for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of the child or young person. A person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered a parent in education law.

Throughout this document 'parent' means each and every person referred to within this definition.

September 2014