

## Bay House School

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

School attendance is subject to various education laws and Bay House school's attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council. This Attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection
- exclusion
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning

It is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly, this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and students via the school's website. If possible we will endeavour to get this policy translated into another language if asked to do so by parents.

#### Section 1

##### **Rationale / Statement of Intent**

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and children play a part in making Bay House School successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and schools share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve high attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality.

For our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

#### Section 2

##### **Operating the Policy**

###### **1. Promoting Good Attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the pupil. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters relating to attendance in our regular newsletter and on our website.
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments. This information can also be viewed on online through Bay House Parent Gateway (BHPG).
- Celebrate good attendance through the school assemblies and reward good or improving attendance through a variety of initiatives.
- Set attendance targets for year offices and tutor groups, and display them around school.
- Set individual attendance targets for pupils to help them focus on improving their attendance.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

### Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Lead

A member of the Senior Leadership Team 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. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place when appropriate.

The Attendance Manager and the Attendance Support Officers (AO Team) will support the Senior Leader in this work. The AO Team will ensure that they consistently monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality and will liaise with the relevant departments within the school. Where attendance falls below the expected levels, a variety of interventions will be used as the AO Team deem appropriate, such as: in school visits to the pupil; home visits; in school attendance panel and legal interventions as outlined in Hampshire County Council's code of conduct.

### Responsibilities of Classroom Staff

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately using the schools electronic tracking system
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the AO Team on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a pupil's absence

### Responsibilities of Pupils

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive in school on time
- Attend all their registrations and lessons on time
- Take responsibility for registering at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours

### Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will :

- Inform the school by phone, text or email, on the first and subsequent days of absence, if their child is not in school and provide a reason for the absence.
- Discuss with the school any planned absences in advance.
- Support their school and their child to aim for 100% attendance each year.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance (an explanation of what constitutes an exceptional circumstance is contained in the Hampshire County Council Attendance Website – see appendix at the end of this document).

## Section 3

### 1. Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day 8.35 am and again for the afternoon session at 13.05 pm.

#### Recording Absence - record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.

### 2. Lateness /Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons.

- The school day begins for tutor time with the first bell at 08.30 am and all pupils are expected to be in their tutor base by 08.35. Arrival after this time (but before 09.05) will be recorded as late. Morning registration is at 08.35 and closes at 09.05. meaning pupils arriving after this time will be coded as absent – unauthorised for the morning session

- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the Courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with County and DfE guidance. This mark shows the pupil to be onsite, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence code 'M'. This information should be provided by the parent in the form of appointment cards, letters or email communications.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting, not only, their own education, but also that of others. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action (see section 6 for further detail).

Parents or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists they will be invited to a meeting in school to discuss the problem and offer further support if needed. If the support is declined, or not acted upon, and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school working in conjunction with Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice. This is in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices for non-attendance (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

### 3. What to do if my child is absent?

#### **First Day Absence**

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

#### If your child is absent you must:

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

#### If your child is absent we will:

Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you, as detailed above; this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

#### **Third Day Absence**

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedure as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquiries to known friends, wider family. Representatives of our AO team may call at a pupil's address to ascertain if they are at home and to ensure that they are safe and free from harm. This is so that the school complies with its legal obligations and County guidance, see: Hampshire County Guidance 'Children on roll but at risk of Missing in Education'.

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/Guidanceforchildrenatriskofmissingineducation-revisedSept2014.pdf>

#### **Ten Day's Absence**

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

#### **Continued or Ongoing Absence**

If your child's misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as Persistent Absentees (PA), and will take high priority. All our PA pupils and their parents will be monitored and contacted by the AO Team.

A variety of interventions may be used to improve their attendance and/or punctuality. If there is no significant improvement resulting from these interventions, then the parent or carer may be invited to attend an in school Attendance Panel meeting where attendance strategies to help them improve their attendance in school will be set.

#### **Section 4**

##### **Request for Leave of Absence:**

Taking leave of absence in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

It is important to note that Headteachers (or their representatives) can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases, holiday will not be authorised.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from reception or year offices) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be recorded unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct, parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

#### **Section 5**

##### **Understanding types of absence:**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised Absence (AA): is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- Unauthorised Absence (UA): is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request.
- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings.
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

#### **Section 6**

##### **Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures:**

In law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

## Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 100 sessions (10 weeks) and parents are complicit in the child's absence

The following legal measures are for students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from: [http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning\\_-\\_behaviour\\_-\\_attendance/attendance\\_-\\_guidancefor\\_-\\_%20parents/possible\\_-\\_penalties](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning_-_behaviour_-_attendance/attendance_-_guidancefor_-_%20parents/possible_-_penalties)

The code of conduct states that Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the student has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period.
2. one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

Parents/Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parent/carer for each child. *NB* This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for a holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent.

The fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance.

Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

**Please note:** If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order. For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at: [www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties).

## **Section 7**

### **1. Leavers**

If your child is leaving our school (other than when leaving at the end of Year 11) parents are asked to:

Give the AO team comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

If students leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

### **2. Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families**

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

### **3. Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including film or TV work & modelling.**

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as 'C', an authorised absence.

### **4. Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport.**

Parents/carers of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's (or representative) discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching. If participation is approved the Headteacher will review this decision if child's progress at school is not maintained thereafter.

### **5. Study Leave**

We do not operate a period of study leave at Bay House School and Sixth Form. Year 11 pupils have an amended taught timetable until they sit their final examination and are expected to attend school throughout this period.

## **6. Teenage Pregnancy**

Support will be directed to keeping a pupil in school and wherever possible her return to full time education as soon as possible after the birth. A pupil who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.