



BURY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Date Approved: September 2019
Last reviewed: September 2023
Review Date: September 2024
Author: Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral)
This policy is for Bury Grammar School

This policy has been written to meet the standards as set out in the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSR) as amended under section 94 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 and has particular regard for the interpretation of these as set out in paragraphs 384 to 407 of the Commentary on the Regulatory Standards September 2022.

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all pupils within school from their 5th birthday.

The school expects full attendance. It is important for pupils to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Principal and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. This is a legal requirement in accordance with section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

The School is open for approximately 180 days each year and pupils are expected to be in attendance at all times, save for periods of official study leave, staff development days (designated home study days for pupils) and a small number of other occasions (e.g. the Infants do not attend at all on Founders' Day and Juniors and Seniors have a holiday in the afternoon).

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA)

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

4. Access to School Buildings

Pupils are not permitted in the school buildings before 7.30am and must leave the school at the end of the school day unless they have signed into the After School Club or are participating in an extra-curricular activity under the supervision of a member of staff.

5. Time of Registration and Register Packs

The school is under a legal obligation to register the presence and absence of all pupils.

Kindergarten can be dropped off from 8am and are registered at 9am and 12.30pm. In the Primary Division, including Reception pupils, Class Teachers are present in the classrooms to greet the pupils from **8.15am**. Registration takes place between 8.40am - 8.45am. In the Senior School and Sixth Form, Form Tutors are expected to be in their form rooms before the registration bell so that the registration can be carried out at **8.45am**.

Pupils in the Primary Division and Kindergarten are registered at morning and afternoon registration. If they leave school, they are signed out by a member of staff. Pupils in the Senior School and Sixth Form are registered in every lesson by a subject teacher. If they leave school, they sign out using the electronic system.

It is compulsory for Sixth Form students to attend registration each morning with their tutor. Sixth Form students may leave to go home at 1.05pm if they do not have lessons for the rest of that day. Special permission must be sought from parents if a student does not have any published lessons for that day and wishes to study at home.































On Wednesday afternoons Year 12 students can choose to participate in either sport, community service, or supervised study in school. An accurate list of pupils who participate in community service or supervised study on Wednesday afternoons as an alternative to sport will be maintained. The Sixth Form secretary will contact each community service placement and confirm attendance. Students in Year 13 have the same choices as Year 12 but also have the privilege to complete study at home, if they choose.

Attendance at registration is a requirement and pupils are expected to arrive punctually. Repeated late arrival to morning registration will result in sanctions. Parents are under an obligation to ensure that their child arrives at school on time. If a pupil is absent from registration then they will be marked with a code 'N'.

In the Primary Division the class teacher is responsible for completing the register. It is the responsibility of the **Form Tutor** (AM registration) and Subject teacher / Sixth Form Secretary (PM registration) to take the register in iSAMS.

6. Register codes

Within the Primary Division it is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure all absences are recorded. The Assistant Head (Pastoral) will monitor this regularly to ensure that code N is not remaining after 10 days. In the Seniors and Sixth Form, it is the responsibility of Form Tutors to investigate and re-code all initial absences coded 'N'. Heads of Year are expected to monitor this regularly to ensure that code N is not allowed to remain for longer than 10 working days.

School Registration Codes	
	No Reason Yet Provided For Absence [N]
	School Closed To Pupils [#]
	Educated Off Site [B]
	Other Authorised Circumstances [C]
	Excluded [E]
	Family Holiday (NOT Agreed) [G]
	Family Holiday (Agreed) [H]
	Illness [I]
	Interview [J]
	Late (Before Registers Closed) [L]
	Medical / Dental Appointments [M]
	Unauthorised Absence [O]
	Approved Sporting Activity [P]
	Religious Observance [R]
	Study Leave [S]
	Late (After Registers Closed) [U]
	Educational Visit or Trip [V]
	Work Experience [W]
	Music Lesson [Q]
	6th Form Cover [T]
	Covid-related illness [>]
	Self Isolating due to Covid 19 [*]
	Shielding due to Covid 19 [^]
	Not required to be in school [X]
	LFD taken [1]
	LFD positive + [2]
	LFD negative - [3]
	LFD void V [4]
	LFD not needed [5]
	Pupil Not On Roll [Z]

6. Closure of Registers

In the primary division registration closes at 9.10am for the morning session, 12.30pm for Infant afternoon session and 1.10pm for Junior afternoon sessions. Registers for Seniors and Sixth Form are closed at **9.05am** for the morning session and at **2.50pm** for the afternoon session.

7. Late arrivals before the registers close

If the time of arrival means that it is still possible to attend form registration, pupils should go to their form rooms and register with their Form Tutor. If the registration period has finished pupils should register at the School Office. The pupil will receive a late (**L**) mark.

8. Late arrivals after registers close

If a pupil arrives after the register has been closed, they must sign in at the School Office. Such a late arrival will be recorded as an unauthorised absence code **(U)** and the time of arrival marked on the register together with the reason that the pupil has offered. The absence will remain unauthorised until the Office has received direct communication with parents which explains the late arrival. This may enable the late arrival to be recorded as an authorised absence if the reason is appropriate.

9. Absence from school owing to illness

In cases of illness, parents should notify the School before 9.00 am. If contact has not been made with the School, a member of the School Office will contact home after 9.30am to establish the cause of the absence. This should occur every day during the period of absence unless it is clear a child will not return to school until a particular date. This will enable the School Office to authorise that absence with the appropriate code without the need for a written note, as long as the parent provides an appropriate reason for the absence to be authorised. This can only occur if contact has taken place with a parent or someone with responsibility for the child. Absence notes given to Form Tutors or to the School Office can be shredded once registers have been amended unless reason is given by a member of SLT to keep notes. These will be stored centrally. If contact cannot be established, the absence will be classed as unauthorised **(code O)**. The office staff will always call two numbers to follow up any unexplained absences and liaise closely with the pastoral team if contact has not been established.

Parents are advised to only keep their child off school if they really are too ill or infectious to attend school. In the Senior School and Sixth Form, a child with vomiting and diarrhoea should be kept off school until they are well again, and their temperature is in the normal range.

In the Primary Division, a child with vomiting and diarrhoea should be kept off school for 48 hours following the last occurrence of illness and until they are well again, and their temperature is in the normal range.

10. Permission to be absent from school where the reason is known about in advance

Parents are expected to request permission in advance for any absence other than illness and the School reserves the right to refuse it. Permission to be absent from school (other than for a brief absence during the school day – eg for a medical appointment – in which case permission should be sought from the relevant Form Tutor) must be sought, in writing, from the Principal. Parents are asked to make these requests with as much notice as possible. Each request for absence is treated on an individual basis. Occasionally pupils' parents request permission for absence for other reasons such as competing in national or international sports tournaments or attending family weddings. Each request is assessed on an individual basis. Pupils of other faiths are allowed to take additional religious holidays eg Jewish New Year, Day of Atonement, Eid but these must be requested by the parent in writing. Sixth Form students must not arrange driving lessons for during the school day.

11. Permission to leave school during the school day

Pupils are not allowed to leave the school site during the school day unless permission has been requested and authorised as above. Sixth Form students may leave the school at 1.00pm if they are not involved in the enrichment programme.

12. Permission to not participate in PE

We require written confirmation from parents of a pupil's inability to take part in PE. For longer term inability to participate, we may require communication from a GP/physiotherapist.

PE/Games is part of the educational curriculum offered at BGS and participation in it is mandatory. Participation will be monitored closely by the PE department and concerns referred to Form Tutors.

13. Truantiing from school

Truantiing from school or from lessons is considered to be a very serious offence and a pupil should expect the School to deal with such conduct as serious misbehaviour. All cases of truantiing are reported to the Deputy Head (Pastoral). Repeated (more than once) acts of truantiing may result in the position of the pupil within the school being reviewed.

14. Term dates and holidays

Term dates are published well in advance, so that parents/guardians can make holiday arrangements which do not require pupils to be absent from school. Parental requests for a pupil to return to school after the beginning of term, to leave school before the end of term, or to be absent during term, must be made in writing to the Principal well in advance and should be seen as an exceptional occurrence, made because of very special circumstances. Absence owing to holiday will only ever be authorised in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Principal.

15. Study leave during mock and public exams

During a mock or public examination period, pupils may be granted study leave. If such leave has been granted the pupils usually only need to attend their exams. The School Office marks, in advance, study leave with a code 'S'. Where a pupil is expected to attend an exam, they will be registered either present or absent. Paper registers are taken at the beginning of each exam.

16. Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- Looked After Children/Children in Care
- Young carers
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering academic mentor support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Having regular check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

17. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality

Heads of Year monitor punctuality and attendance. Continued lateness to school will result in sanctions. The school may contact parents when a pupil's attendance falls below 95% and there has been more than one period of absence. The school will also contact the parents of all pupils whose attendance is below 90% to make parents aware of the rate of absence and also to offer support and advice. Concerns about attendance are also raised by Heads of Year with the Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral)/ Senior Teacher Pastoral using CPOMS and pastoral meetings in school.

Where a parent has not supplied a reason for an absence within 10 school days, the absence will be deemed as unauthorised, and the code changed from 'N' to 'O'. If a subsequent reason for the absence is provided by a parent, then the absence may then be authorised with an appropriate code.

Primary Procedures



<u>Absence period</u>	<u>Action</u>
Step One – Initial absence Day One	Member of Primary Admin rings home to enquire nature of absence
Step 2 - Below 95% (at end of a half term)	Class Teacher to make contact with parents to inform them that attendance has fallen below 95%
Step 3 - Below 90% (at end of a half term)	Assistant Head (Pastoral) sends attendance letter home.
Step 4 - Below 90% (at end of a term) - second occurrence	Face to Face meeting with Assistant Head (Pastoral)
Step 5- Below 75% or repeated occurrence	Assistant Head (Pastoral) face to face meeting If letter and parent meeting have failed to bring about improvement, consultation with Education Welfare Officer at Bury Local Authority for advice.

Seniors and Sixth Form

<u>Absence period</u>	<u>Action</u>
Step 1 - 3 consecutive days of absence	FT to make phone call home on 3rd day or flag with Pastoral Officer (PO) to make phone call home. FT or PO to call home.
Step 2 - Below 95% (at end of a half term)	Email from PO informing parent of pupil's attendance % – advising that it is school policy to inform parents where attendance falls below this level. See template below.
Step 3 - Below 90% (at end of a half term)	Initial supportive HOY letter. See template below.
Step 4 - Between 75% and 85% or insufficient improvement or worsening absence after already initiating Step 3.	Options depending on the circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second email (where appropriate) • HOY phone call home • HOY face-to face meeting • DHP face to face meeting
Step 5- Below 75%	DHP face to face meeting If letter and parent meeting have failed to bring about improvement, consultation with Education Welfare Officer at Bury Local Authority for advice.

18. Reporting on attendance and reporting concerns

Parents should be aware that the school is required to report on attendance to Further and Higher educational establishments. A poor attendance record can significantly disadvantage an application to such an establishment. Parents are provided with registration certificates with full school reports. They should check the accuracy of the attendance certificate and if they wish to query it should contact their child's Form Tutor.

Parents should be aware that the School has a legal duty to report the following to the Local Authority:

- Ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence);
- Failure to attend regularly (typically attendance <87% without good reason), and
- The deletion from the school register where the next school is not known.

Attendance Policy Issues and Updates

Date	Policy version	Summary of key change(s)
Sept 2023	1	Additional information in introduction, inclusion of legal framework and definitions. Time of registration amended to include information on primary division. Paragraph 16 included to reflect procedures for persistent absence and more information added to 17 for monitoring attendance.

