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ATTENDANCE POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Rationale and Terms of Reference

This policy has been written to comply with Department for Education Advice (DfE) on school attendance and guidance from Lancashire County Council

All young people between the ages of 11-16 are required to be in full-time education. From September 2013 all young people between 16 and 17 are required to be either in full time education or in training or in employment with training attached to it. This has risen to 18 in 2015.

Regular attendance to school is a key factor in determining a student's educational outcomes. Students whose attendance is 91% or above are extremely likely to realise their potential: nationally 73% of them will achieve the national benchmark of 5A*-C passes including English and Maths whereas the figures of those with attendance below 90% is 35%. It is estimated that a week's absence every year for five years results in a student achieving the equivalent of half a grade less.

References and link to other policies:

- **BHS Behaviour Policy**
- **BHS Home School Agreement**

Policy Aim

The aims of this policy are:

- To promote the importance of excellent attendance (above 97%)
- To outline the procedures that the school uses in relation to attendance

Promoting attendance

The school will promote good attendance in the following ways:

- By demonstrating a strong attendance ethos
- Having a clear policy on absence
- Using effective systems
- Using data to improve school and student performance
- Promote the importance of legal requirements to all staff, students and parents/carers
- Intervening early when individual student absence gives cause for concern
- Have support systems in place for vulnerable pupils
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance by ensuring appropriate sanctions are in place for persistently poor absence, in line with local authority guidance?

Parents'/Carers' Duty

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. There are only three reasons why a child may be absent from school:

- Ill health
- Religious observance
- Where school transport should be provided by the local authority but is unavailable

Authorised Absence

The Headteacher has the discretion to authorise other unavoidable absences including those for the following reasons:

- Medical/dental appointments
- Interviews for employment/further or higher education
- Agreed attainment tests e.g. music grades, driving test etc.
- Compassionate grounds e.g. bereavement
- Participation in elite sporting competitions or training

Only the Headteacher or his nominated representative can authorise absence. Parents/carers do not have this legal authority. Requests may be made in writing or may be emailed to attendance@burnley-cs.org. Requests must be made in advance if they are to be authorised. The only exception to this is when the request is made on compassionate grounds.

Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence is any absence not authorised by the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are ones, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given. Unauthorised absences may result in the school referring the pupil to the Local Authority.

This includes:

- Parents allowing children to be absent from school unnecessarily.
- Truancy
- Unexplained absence
- Persistent – non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Oversleeping
- Medical appointments of more than half a day without good reason
- Inadequate uniform/clothing.

Notifying School of a child's Absence

The school operate a first-day call system. Parents/Carers are required to telephone the school before 9.00am on **any** day when their child is absent. If the absence is expected to last more than one day, the parent/carer should indicate the day of return. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the Pastoral Leader or one of the Attendance Team will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence for the absence to check on the safety of the child. If we unable to make contact we will conduct a home visit on the first day of absence.

01282 681 950 attendance@burnleyhigh.com

Medical Appointments

Parents/Carers are asked to make all but emergency medical and dental appointment outside of the school day. If this is not possible, please give as much notice as possible of the intended appointment. Under certain circumstances appointment cards/letters may be requested before absence is authorised. If you need to collect your child from school for an appointment, he/she must sign out of the building and back in again when they return. It is not appropriate for a child to miss a full school day for one appointment, unless we have been provided a medical letter indicating that the appointment requires a full day. If your child must attend a series of appointments during the school day, please ensure, where possible that the times and days of appointments are varied to avoid the same lesson being interrupted each time.

Term Time Holidays

All holidays taken during term time will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents/Carers can email their request to attendance@burnleyhigh.com stating the nature of any exceptional circumstances. Applications must be made well in advance and before any bookings are made. The law does not permit the Headteacher to authorise term time holidays or extensions to holidays which run into term time retrospectively. Parents/Carers may be served with a penalty notice. This is £120 fine per child per parent.

Punctuality

The school doors open at 8.20am. The school day promptly starts at 8.30am. Students will be reminded of this on the first occasion they arrive late at school followed by a verbal warning the second time they are late. The third late arrival will result in a letter home notifying Parent(s)/Carer(s) that punctuality is a cause for concern. Detentions will be issued for any unexplained lateness. This may be on the same day or arranged for a later date, depending on the period of time the student is late. If significant improvement is not seen over a specified period, parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting. Poor punctuality could also impact on whether students are allowed to take part in trips. This will be discussed with parents at open evening and may result in your child being mentored by a member of the attendance team. Persistent lateness to school can also result in the case being referred to the Local Authority which may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Monitoring

The school monitors attendance on a weekly basis. If a student's attendance falls below 95% it is a cause for concern. Depending on the reasons for the non-attendance, parents/carers may be sent a letter alerting them to the issue and inviting them into school to discuss the matter with a view to seeing how we can work in partnership to improve the situation. School may request medical evidence in order to authorise absence from school. This may be for:

- any single period of absence of more than 5 school days
- the third separate period of illness in any half term and for ALL subsequent absences thereafter.
- any absence for a student with 93% or below attendance and therefore at risk of falling into the 'persistently absent' category (less than 90% attendance)

Medical evidence can take any of the following forms:

- A medical appointment card
- A medical appointment letter
- A copy of a prescription with the name of the child and a relevant date clearly visible
- Medication with a chemist's label showing the name of the child and a relevant date clearly visible

- An “unfit for School” declaration or letter from your GP
- A hospital discharge letter

In cases where a student’s attendance falls below 90%, or in circumstance of unauthorised absence, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority. Habitual lateness is also a cause for concern and has a direct impact on the child’s progress. The definition of late is where a student arrives to registration after the register has been taken. The attendance record will be coded ‘L’ for late. Our school registers are held open until 8.45am; however students are expected to be in registration for 8.30am. Sanctions for late arrivals are detailed under punctuality. If a student arrives late after 8.45am they will be recorded as an ‘L’. Poor attendance and lateness after the registers close will result in legal proceedings being initiated including the issuing of a fixed penalty notice or an attendance order. The school has a statutory obligation to inform the Local Authority of any student who is **persistently late to school, fails to attend regularly or has had ten or more days of continuous unauthorised absence.**

Celebration

Termly and annual prizes are awarded to students with an exceptional attendance record.

Support

The school offers a variety of different support to students and their families where attendance is an issue. This may include support from a form tutor, a mentor, coach, the school counsellor, the pastoral team, the SENCO and Senior Team. In some circumstances Children’s Social Care may be contacted to support a pupil with persistent unexplained absence. The school also works with other external agencies to support students who are absent from school and their families.

Fixed Penalty Notices (fines)

The circumstances in which the school can issue a fixed penalty notice (fine) are determined by the Local Authority. Up to two fixed penalty notices may be issued per child per year. Notices will be issued by the Local Authority at the request of the school in the following circumstances:

- Early intervention to address unauthorised absence (where that unauthorised absence would meet the criteria for a prosecution under s444, 1966 Education Act)
- Unauthorised holidays in term time
- Unwarranted delayed return from an authorised absence (without school agreement)
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed

The fixed penalty is £60 if payment is made within 28 days but this rises to £120 if the payment is not made within 28 days but paid within 42 days. Failure to pay a fixed penalty notice will result in fast track prosecution under section 444 Education Act 1996. **Fixed penalty notices are issued to all parents/carers who have parental responsibility for any child.**

Prosecution

The parents/carers of a student who fails to attend regularly may be issued with an attendance order and may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if they fail to comply with it. Depending on the nature of the offence, fines can range up to £2,500.

Latest update on the statutory guidance can be viewed on DfE

www.education.gov.uk

ABSENCE PROCEDURE (Issued to Parents)



Parents have a responsibility to contact the School as soon as possible on the first day of any absence. Please ensure you notify the School of any changes to your contact telephone numbers.

School contact details

01282 681950

E Mail:
attendance@burnleyhigh.com

The parent informs the School about the absence before 9am, giving the reason and expected date of return to School. The School makes the decision whether to

If no message is received on day one then the School contact the parent/carer

If there has been no contact, by the latest day 1, then a home visit will be made by a member of the Staff team in the afternoon of day 1

If the attendance falls below 95%, parents/carers will be invited into school for a meeting with our Attendance Team and/or Head of Pastoral. A home visit may be undertaken

If the absence persists external support may be enlisted. Medical evidence will be required to authorise any further

Unauthorised absence/Persistent absence may result in a penalty notice being served/legal court proceedings

Improvement at end of half term:

- Thank you letter to parents/carers
- Postcard of praise