

Reference:	Status:	Approved By:	Date:	Revision:
BC/STC/012	Approved	Curriculum Governors	18 March 2015	011

Attendance (Parents/Carers)

POLICY

BIDEFORD COLLEGE

BIDEFORD COLLEGE WILL:

- Treat attendance as a priority;
- Have a clear policy on absence;
- Use data and other information to improve College and student performance;
- Promote the importance of good attendance to students and their parents/carers;
- Intervene as early as possible when individual student absence gives cause for concern ;
- Have support systems in place for vulnerable students and make best use of additional support for students and parents with greatest need;
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance.

PRINCIPLES

Students should be at school, on time unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from the College without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the College (not by parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Information about the cause of absence is always required through daily telephone contact and/or by letter and/or by using the absence page in the College planner.

Students with attendance of below 85% are classed as Persistent Absentees.

AUTHORISED ABSENCES

These are mornings and/or afternoons away from the College for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Parents/Carers can explain absences but **they cannot authorise them.**

Only the College can decide whether explanations about an absence are acceptable and can be authorised.

If a child is absent from College for medical or dental treatment. The College must be informed in advance and where possible appointments should be arranged after College.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

These are those which the College does not consider reasonable and for which permission has not been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping students off school unnecessarily e.g. birthday treats, visiting relatives, too tired after a late night etc;
- Truancy before or during the College day;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at College too late to be registered (this will not apply when the cause is due to the school bus);
- Holidays taken during term time for all students;
- Authorisation for Holidays will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**;

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the College, the parents/carers and the student. Parents/carers are requested to contact the College at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the College may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Education Authority. The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed the EWO can use:

- Fast Track proceedings leading to Penalty Notices;
- Court proceedings to prosecute;
- Seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. The EWO is independent of the College and will give impartial advice. Please contact the EWO through the College Reception.

PROCEDURES

The College applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- *Illness*: contact the College by telephone on a daily basis by 10am and write explaining the reason for absence. Please include your child's Name and Tutor Group on any correspondence. The student hands this letter in to Student Reception on the first day of return. If the College Planner is used for this

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communication the student shows this to Student Reception on their first day of return to school.

- Other unavoidable reasons: as above.
- Holiday (All Years). All holidays requests will be recorded as UNAUTHORISED ABSCENES unless they are considered by the College to be exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers need to collect Absence Request Form (S2) in advance.
- *Lateness (other than College transport)*: contact the College by telephone. Written communication supporting lateness can be delivered to Student Reception.
- *Penalty Notices*: if a request for absence is refused and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and this will make parents/carers liable to a penalty notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer.

COLLEGE TARGETS

- The College target for attendance in 2015/16 is 94.0%. It is hoped that with new initiatives and encouragement from the College, students and parents/carers, this can be steadily improved.

COLLEGE PERSONNEL WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Tutors

Home School Liaison Officers

Student Support Assistants
Assistant Principal
EWO (Miss A Simnett)
Attendance Officer (Mrs A Gwilliam)

SUMMARY

The College has a legal duty to publish absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parent/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. College staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Attendance (Sixth Form) Policy
Staff Procedures
College Administration Procedures

REVISION HISTORY

011 Update attendance target for 2015/16
010 Update attendance target for 2014/15
009 Update attendance target for 2013/14
008 Update attendance target for 2012/13
007 Update attendance target for 2011/12
006 Update attendance target for 2010/11
005 Update attendance target for 2009/10
004 Update attendance target for 2008/9
003 Update attendance target for 2007/8
002 Update attendance target for 2006/7
001 Original document