



# Bennett Memorial Diocesan School

## Attendance Policy

### Adoption Arrangements and Date

All statutory policies in the Trust are ultimately the responsibility of the Trust Board. To enable it to discharge this responsibility appropriately and in collaboration with the constituent schools, the Trust Board will

1. either set a full Trust wide policy,
2. or set a 'policy principles' document (a framework within which LGBs develop a full and appropriately customised policy),
3. or delegate to LGBs the power to develop their own policy which the Trust Board will then ratify.

<b>Review Body:</b>	<b>Local Governing Body</b>	<b>Adopted:</b>	<b>February 2021</b>
<b>Leadership Grp Responsibility:</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Date of next review:</b>	<b>Spring 2024</b>
<b>Policy Type:</b>	<b>Non-statutory</b>	<b>Review period:</b>	<b>3 years</b>

**This is a Level 3 Policy against the Trust Governance Plan.**

As a Church of England School, we seek to ensure that all students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise their true potential. The school is committed to providing a welcoming, caring environment, in which each member of the school community feels valued and secure. All school staff work with students and their families to ensure every student attends school regularly and punctually.

The school has an established and effective system of incentives which acknowledge the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and challenges the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

In order to meet these objectives Bennett Memorial Diocesan School has established an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## **AIMS**

1. To maximise students' attendance at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
4. To employ a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
5. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
6. To further develop our rewards system and sanctions in order to ensure that messages regarding the importance of good attendance are consistently reinforced.
7. To promote effective partnerships with the Kent Attendance Service and with other services and agencies.
8. To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

## **THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED BY:**

### **A. Making attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors**

1. Ensure that attendance policies and procedures are clearly explained in all school literature.
2. Highlight the importance of attendance at the Welcome evening, so that parents new to the school are fully briefed on the school's attendance policy.
3. Provide INSET training for staff so that all procedures are carried out efficiently and with consistency
4. Discuss attendance issues with the School Liaison Officer | PRU, Inclusion and Attendance | Early Help and Preventative Services so that there is good liaison between school and the Attendance Service.
5. Use reward systems such as achievement points and certificates to encourage students to attend regularly.

6. Promote parental partnerships using a range of opportunities so that parents experiencing difficulties feel able to approach the school for support and advice.

## **B. Registration and attendance**

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration by using e-registration and Lesson Monitor to ensure standardised recording of:
  - i. authorised/unauthorised absence
  - ii. late arrivals
  - iii. educational activity
  - iv. presence
  - v. percentage attendance
2. Make parents aware on first day of absence, if not previously notified to school. If no contact is made, a message is sent home via Schoolcomms.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures and appropriate response to lateness.
4. Utilise clear internal school procedures prior to referral to School Liaison Officer.
5. Ensure that an identified member of staff gathers information before meeting with the School Liaison Officer.
6. Review attendance regularly, following designated procedures.

## **C. To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Students**

1. Highlight attendance in:
  - a. PACE
  - b. Assemblies
  - c. Parent information evenings
  - d. Individual meetings with parents and students
2. Provide opportunities for parents to speak to staff and involve parents from the earliest stage.
3. Communicate regularly with all parents to provide attendance data and the appropriate RAG rating. Attendance above 98% green, between 95 and 97.9%, amber, below 95% red.
4. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.

## **D. To develop a systematic approach in gathering and analysing attendance related data**

1. Produce attendance reports
  - a. Annual reports for governors
  - b. Fortnightly reports for Year Managers and welfare
  - c. Weekly reports for LMT

2. Attendance to be reported to parents through regular attendance letters.

### **E. Support attendance through rewards, sanctions and reintegration**

- Make active use of the school's rewards and sanctions system. Students with 100% attendance each term will receive Achievement Points, one for each week of full attendance and one for each week of being on time. This will contribute to the school's rewards system through the generation of certificates and end of year awards.
- Support students who have missed school due to illness. Students should always make sure they have collected and caught up with any missed work. If they need support with this they should speak to their year manager and/or one of the student welfare team. A staged approach will be used to supporting good attendance through referral to ARC for those students who have had prolonged absence.
- Take action against parents who fail to ensure that their child attends school, who condone absence or do not ensure punctuality. This could take the form of referral to the School Liaison Officer, fixed penalty fines and/or prosecution. This will also apply to parents who take students out of school during term time without seeking and being granted permission by the headteacher.

### **ABSENCE and ILLNESS PROCEDURES**

Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours and students should only be taken out of school if this is impossible to arrange. To request permission to take students out of school parents should e-mail [attendance@bennett.kent.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@bennett.kent.sch.uk) preferably copying in the year manager, and the student should present the letter to him or her during morning registration. Once approved, details will be added to SIMs so that the subject teacher and reception staff are aware of the need to leave the school. The student should sign out in reception before leaving the school site.

Requests for absence in exceptional circumstances should be sent directly to the headteacher. Parents will need to complete a 'Withdrawal from learning form' at least two weeks in advance to make a request. The form can be downloaded from the website. Leave of absence for holidays will not be granted during term time. Should parents choose to take their child on holiday in term time this will be classed as unauthorised and will result in a fixed penalty fine and/or prosecution.

If a student is unexpectedly absent from school because of illness or any other reason parents should telephone or email the school on the first day of absence to explain why. The email address is [attendance@bennett.kent.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@bennett.kent.sch.uk). They should also email or telephone on each subsequent day of absence unless they are able to say how long the student will be away for.

If no message has been received by 11 am on the morning of absence the school will send a text message to the mobile phone of the parent marked as first contact to ascertain the reason for absence and, if no response is received, this will be followed by an email and/or a letter. If no information is received the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

On the day of return a letter should be written and signed by the parents confirming the date and reason for absence. This should be placed by the student in the box outside the school office where it will be noted on the register by the administrative staff. Students should not ask their tutors to take letters from them.

Students who become unwell during a lesson should tell the member of staff teaching them who may contact the school nurse. Students should report to the school office if they become ill outside of lesson time. Students should never contact their parents by mobile phone if they are unwell; should it be necessary for them to go home, the school nurse will contact their parents and arrange for them to be collected.

Absence which is not accounted for by parents will be unauthorised and could result in referral to the School Liaison Officer, a penalty fine and/or prosecution. This will also be the case if a student's attendance falls below 90 per cent, even if explanations have been given. Frequent absence for illness will result in a request for medical evidence for all absences.

All attendance rules also apply to Sixth Form students apart from issuing penalty fines and/or prosecution. The school will request medical evidence for attendance under 90 per cent; students who have low attendance will be monitored and interventions will be made to improve attendance. To continue to study in the Sixth Form students must attend over 90 per cent of the time.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

Students should arrive on site between 8.30 and 8.40 am in time for morning registration at 8.45 am.

### **Non-Assembly Days**

Students who arrive from 8.45 am to 9 am should go straight to their tutor group. Students who arrive after 9 am should come up the front drive, sign in at the reception and go straight to registration, where they should be registered by their tutor and the minutes late marked on the register, together with the number of the bus they have arrived on or no reason given, whichever is appropriate. This procedure is followed because it is important for the office to have a clear record of who has arrived in school and at what time for when the Schoolcomms message is sent out to parents in the morning. This is an important safeguarding issue. Sixth Form students should register on the Vericool machine and then go to their tutor rooms.

### **Assembly Days**

Students who arrive late when their year group is having an assembly should come up the front drive, register in reception (or on Vericool if Sixth Form) and go straight to assembly. Administrative staff will ensure the mark is entered accurately onto the register based on information in the signing in book or the Vericool machine.

Students who are found arriving late by senior leaders on their early duty will have their names taken and parents will be informed by email that their child has been late to school. Late arrivals for no permissible reason will result in a lunchtime detention, followed by an escalating scale of interventions should punctuality not improve, ultimately resulting in referral to the School Liaison Officer, fixed penalty fines and/or prosecution.