



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

|                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>GB Committee Responsible:</b> | <b>Curriculum &amp; Achievement</b> |
| <b>Reviewed by:</b>              | Kieran Robinson                     |
| <b>Review Date:</b>              | September 2020                      |
| <b>Approved by Committee:</b>    | 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2020     |
| <b>Next Review Date:</b>         | 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2021     |



## **Bentley Wood High School**

### **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Important:

At the time of policy review the UK and many other countries were managing the implications of an international pandemic caused by the virus COVID-19. In response to this the school has adapted key aspects of the policy outlined below based on the latest Government guidance and external advice from the local authority.

The Attendance and Punctuality Policy will continue to reflect the high expectations and environment of our school. Key changes should be read in conjunction with Bentley Wood High School's COVID-19 risk assessment and Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

The senior leadership team continue to review the national and DfE guidance to ensure that our response to the pandemic is appropriate, sets high expectations and maintains safety across the school community.

Key changes relating to COVID-19:

1. From the start of the autumn term 2020 student attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules contained within the rest of this policy will apply.
2. Shielding advice for all students was paused on 1 August 2020. Unless a student remains on the shielding patient list Bentley Wood will expect them to return to school.
3. Although school attendance is now mandatory there will be circumstances associated with COVID-19 which mean students cannot attend as a result of guidance set out by Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care. Examples of these may include: student self-isolating while they wait to get tested after experiencing symptoms or students quarantining after receiving a positive test result. In these situations, the student's attendance will be recorded with the 'X' code.
4. In conjunction with Bentley Wood High School's risk assessment, the Attendance Officer will make contact with the family of a student self-isolating. The Attendance Officer will ensure that their absence is due to reasons outlined in point 2 and that they have arranged or have already been tested. The Attendance Officer will explain to the family that their daughter should return to school as soon as they receive a negative result or once the period of quarantine has come to an end. If the student or close relative receives a positive test that requires them to quarantine the associated evidence will be required by the school.
5. Bentley Wood will return to using the normal attendance codes set out on page 9 of the attendance guidance (see DfE guidance).
6. Tutors will register their tutees during the AM and PM registrations sessions. The times of these sessions have changed to support social distancing and can be found in the staff handbook and COVID-19 risk assessment.

7. Year 10 and 11 tutors pass their registers to reception after AM registration. These registers will be added to SIM's between 9:00-9:30am.

Bentley Wood High School recognises that punctual and regular school attendance is an essential precondition of social inclusion, a prerequisite to effective learning and a legal requirement. It notes that poor school attendance is a direct cause of social exclusion and underachievement. Bentley Wood High School believes that students should attend school regularly and punctually because school is where they learn and school is where they are safe.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws.

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Reduce absence including persistent absence;
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Act early to address patterns of absence;
- Parents / carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age are registered at school attend regularly;
- All students to be punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.

Bentley Wood is committed to providing an excellent education for all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We are committed to providing an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential and therefore an Attendance Officer is employed to support this. We consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. The Attendance Officer, senior and middle leaders, tutors and subject teachers consistently; convey to students and their parents /carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

### **Legal Enforcement by The Department of Education and the Local Authority**

As part of promoting excellent attendance and punctuality Harrow Local Authority has set up the Attendance Intervention Model (AIM) for all Harrow schools. AIM will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute those parents / carers who fail to comply with a school attendance order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

In addition, the Local Authority will impose Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution on parents / carers for unauthorised absence and may also be issued where parents / carers allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

For further information, relating to AIM and the code of conduct on educational penalty notices please see appendix 1.

## Holidays in term time

### Holidays during term time are not authorised.

From September 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **The amendments make clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Parents/carers requiring to take their daughter's out of school during term time, for any reason other than illness or medical appointment, must complete a Leave of Absence request, in advance, to be authorised by the Head Teacher. Only requests that the Head Teacher deems as exceptional circumstances will be authorised, backed up by relevant supporting evidence. Parents/carers who take their daughter out of school during term time where the absence has not been authorised, may receive an EPN (Education Penalty Notice) from the Local Authority. If a student is absent in days leading up to, or following a school holiday then medical evidence will be required.

## School Procedures

The school has morning and afternoon registration for all students. Registration is taken electronically using SIMS in tutor groups. Any student who is absent from school during the morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded by the N code in the register. It is the responsibility of the tutor or their substitute, to ensure that registration is accurate with tutor time and that students are seated and silent during registration. In the event that there is a problem with SIMS the tutor, or their substitute, must take an accurate hard copy. Tutors must also report the issue with SIMS to the office. The Attendance Officer monitors that all registers on a daily basis to ensure they are all completed accurately and on time.

Registers are returned to the office following registration. The Attendance Officer changes the codes in the registers for educational trips or for illness. Parents must notify the school on the first day of absence by telephone or email to the school office and on each subsequent day. The Attendance Officer sends absence messages to the parents / carers who have not given prior notification of a students' absence. If the Attendance Officer does not receive a response by break time a second absence message is sent which is followed up by a phone at lunch time if the parent / carer has still not been in contact to explain the absence.

Parents / carers are responsible for providing an explanation for an absence. However, if there is no communication with the school it is the responsibility of the tutor with the support of the pastoral leadership team to find the reason for the unexplained absence. A reason for all unexplained absence should be discussed with parents within a week of their occurrence. Notes received from parents / carers explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. Parents / carers can use the space provided in the link book. If there are attendance concerns about the student, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

The Attendance Officer supported by a Heads of Year or senior leader will be present at the school entrance between 8.450-9.10 to ensure students enter to the school safely but also to question any student arriving late and record their name, form and reason. Any student arriving after morning registration must sign with the Attendance Officer. Any students arriving late will be issued with an after-school pastoral detention on the same day. Failure to attend the detention will result in an SLG detention on Friday which is run by a member of the senior leadership team. Students who arrive

to school after 8:50 can be coded as 'U' (late after registration period), which reflects as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. It will be at the discretion of the school as to whether a student is coded 'U' or 'L' depending on the reason and/or history of punctuality. If a student is late regularly to school, then their parents / carers will be invited to attend a punctuality panel meeting. If the students continue to be regularly late to school, then an education penalty notice may be issued (see appendix 1 and 2).

Class teachers take an electronic register during the first 10 minutes of each teaching period so that attendance to lessons is monitored throughout the day. Teachers make use of their 'history' button on SIMS, which enables them to monitor, and engage with, attendance of their classes in previous lessons. Subject teachers should check the time that a student arrives at the lesson and should only allow sufficient time for the student to have collected her books. They should record in SIMS if a student is late, for use in the annual school report. Tutors and subject teachers will regularly remind students about their punctuality to all lessons if it is causing concern. They may keep a student on detention at break time, lunch time or after school. The Head of Year and Head of Department should be informed.

It is essential that students leaving the premises (e.g. for a medical appointment) or returning to school later in the day sign in and out with the Attendance Officer. They must always be picked up by a parent / carer or appropriate adult. The school has the right to refuse to grant permission for the student leave if this is not the case.

### **Further Absence Procedures**

The safeguarding team monitor attendance on a daily basis and ensures appropriate safeguarding responses for vulnerable students who is missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. After 3 consecutive days of absence where the parent / carer has not informed the school of the reason the Head of Year and the safeguarding officer are informed. If the absence continues without explanation, where deemed appropriate, the Attendance Officer will make a home visit. If a student is absent from school for more than 10 consecutive days without explanation they are classified as a student missing from education and the Harrow Duty & Assessment team are alerted. On the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive day the student will be removed from the school roll after a reasonable investigation to establish their whereabouts has taken place.

If a student moves out of the area and is not attending school because it is too far for them to reasonably travel to Bentley Wood, the Head of Year liaises with parents / carers about schooling in the new area. If no schooling has been found the student is referred to Harrow Duty & Assessment team as missing from education. Once the referral has been actioned, the student can be taken off role.

Half termly letters are sent to parents / carers of students with an attendance below 96%. The students are then closely monitored by senior leaders, Attendance Officer and pastoral teams. Attendance panel meetings which require the attendance of the parents / carers are set up for any students with attendance below 90. This is chaired by a senior or pastoral leader along with the Attendance Officer. In some cases, a member of the Governing Body may be asked to attend the meeting. Targets are set and agreed by the parents / carers, these are then closely monitored by the Attendance Officer. If there is still no significant improvement the student will receive an individual attendance plan. A CAF referral may also be filled out and the student is referred to the Duty and Assessment team at Harrow Children's Services. The school may refer

the case Harrow Council to be considered for AIM, this may lead to fines or court proceedings.

If a student has an unavoidable and lengthy absence, it is important that on return they are made to feel welcome. The Head of Year will meet with the student and provide support to catch up on missed work and share information that has been passed to the other students.

### **Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality**

The Attendance Officer, Heads of Year, Achievement leaders and the senior leader responsible for attendance monitor attendance and punctuality on a daily basis. Particular focus is given to students who are vulnerable or are at risk of becoming persistent absentees.

The Attendance Officer and senior leader responsible for attendance chair separate fortnightly attendance and punctuality meetings with the pastoral leadership team of each year group. The attendance and punctuality of all groups of students is discussed, particularly those classified or at risk of become persistent absentees. Interventions are agreed, evaluated and adapted during these meetings to ensure maximum impact. The shared agenda and minutes of these meetings are recorded in a shared and secure area.

The senior leader responsible for attendance presents the outcomes of these meetings for discussion at the weekly senior leadership business meeting. At these meetings individuals, and groups of students such as those identified as pupil premium are analysed and actions agreed. Previous interventions and their impact are also evaluated.

The senior leader responsible for attendance and punctuality will also present regularly at Governing Body meetings.

### **Promoting Good Attendance**

*Please refer to the Rewards Policy for additional information.*

Bentley Wood High School believes that promoting good attendance frequently is essential. There is at least one termly assembly for each year group, which rewards outstanding and improved attendance of individuals. The Head of Year and tutors maintain exceptionally high standards of attendance and punctuality and promote its effects on attainment and progress regularly. Key information from our attendance policy is shared with families during all parents evening, and meetings are set up with individual student's parents / carers to discuss attendance. Parents / carers will be updated on a termly basis of their daughter's most current attendance figure when receiving the assessment reports. Attendance also features in the Wise Thoughts programme.

### **Religious holidays**

Bentley Wood High School follows Harrow's SACRE Guidance when authorising religious holidays. Parents/carers must apply for this leave in advance of the religious occasion using the appropriate leave of absence form.

- Bentley Wood High School will only authorise absence for a date 'exclusively set apart by the religious body' in the SACRE list

- If a date has not been 'exclusively set apart' on the SACRE list or by the relevant religious body, Bentley Wood will consider whether to grant leave under exceptional circumstances and in doing so consider whether the religious observance can be accommodated outside of school hours
- Absence taken on a school day for a festival falling at a weekend, or in a school holiday, would not be authorised by Bentley Wood
- Additional days taken on either side of the day explicitly set aside for observance would not be authorised on the grounds of religious observance;

### **Contents of Admission Register**

(To be read in relation to the Data Protection and Admissions Policy)

Bentley Wood High Schools admission register contains the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

### **Contents of Attendance Register**

Bentley Wood High School record student attendance during an AM and PM registration sessions. During these sessions Bentley Wood records whether a student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Bentley Wood High School records these reasons through appropriate use of the attendance codes set out in

### **Expected First Day of Attendance**

Bentley Wood High School enters pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. For most students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the Bentley Wood High School will establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly.

Bentley Wood High School will notify the local authority within five days of adding a student's name to the admission register and will provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the student.

### **Pupils Moving to a New Address and/or School**

Where the parent of a student notifies the school that the student will live at another address, Bentley Wood High School will record the following in the admission register:

- (a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live
- (b) the new address
- (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent notifies the school that the student is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, Bentley Wood High School will record in the admission register:

(a) the name of the other school

(b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

HoY's will hold exit interviews with families prior to their departure using the template found in appendix 3.

### **Deletions from the Admission Register**

A student can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

### **Amendments to the Admission Register and Attendance Register**

Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

## **Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register**

Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

## **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year.

The target for attendance in the academic year 20120 – 2021 is at least 96%

*Parents / carers can find a copy of this policy on the school website along with the start and finishing time of the day, our term dates and INSET days.*

The School will use a **computerised system** for keeping the school attendance records.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION  | MEANING                     |
|------|--|-----------------------------|
| /    | Present (AM)   | Present                     |
| \    | Present (PM)   | Present                     |
| B    | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)  | Approved Education Activity |
| C    | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence          |
| D    | Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)                       | Approved Education Activity |
| E    | Excluded (no alternative provision made)   | Authorised absence          |
| F    | Extended family holiday (agreed)   | Authorised absence          |
| G    | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)                    | Unauthorised absence        |
| H    | Family holiday (agreed)  | Authorised absence          |
| I    | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)                                    | Authorised absence          |
| J    | Interview  | Approved Education Activity |
| L    | Late (before registers closed)   | Present                     |
| M    | Medical/Dental appointments  | Authorised absence          |
| N    | No reason yet provided for absence   | Unauthorised absence        |
| O    | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)                     | Unauthorised absence        |
| P    | Approved sporting activity   | Approved Education Activity |
| R    | Religious observance   | Authorised absence          |
| S    | Study leave  | Authorised absence          |
| T    | Traveller absence  | Authorised absence          |
| U    | Late (after registers closed)  | Unauthorised absence        |
| V    | Educational visit or trip  | Approved Education Activity |
| W    | Work experience  | Approved Education Activity |

|   |   |                                     |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| X | Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students<br><br>Non-attendance due to agreed reasons for absence related to COVID-19 | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure  | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Student not yet on roll   | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to students   | Not counted in possible attendances |
| * | Unavailable from September  | Not counted in possible attendances |

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

## Appendix 1

### **Attendance Intervention Model and Code of Conduct on Education Penalty Notices**

Harrow Council has updated its policy on School Attendance and Education Penalty Notices. If your child is absent from school without satisfactory reason, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. Harrow Council will be issuing **one EPN per parent per child** where a child is absent from school without authorisation from the Head teacher and where the child has:

- At least 20 sessions (10 school days) of unauthorised absences within a period of no more than 12 weeks (term time).
- A leave of absence of at least 10 consecutive sessions (5 school days) not approved by head teacher as exceptional.
- In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after the register has closed and has received at least eight (8) unauthorised late marks within a period of ten (10) weeks (term time).
- Where the child has attendance below 90% and at least 5% absences are unauthorised.

Please note that it is the Head teacher who must determine whether an absence can be authorised in line with the statutory regulations and guidance. Head teachers are not permitted to authorise leave of absence for holidays during term time.

Appendix 2

|                    | Number of lates  | Intervention  |   |  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
|                    |  | Pastoral  | HOY   | Attendance officer                                       | SLG   |
| Level 1            | 1  | Detention 1   |   |  |   |
|                    | 2  | Detention 2   |   |  |   |
|                    | 3  | Detention 3 + HoY consulted   |   |  |   |
| Attendance meeting |  |   |   |  |   |
| Level 2            | Punctuality reviewed:<br>Escalation to level 2 if student receives 1-3 lates since last review | Pastoral detentions and report<br>Phone call home                       | Monitor tutor report closely                      | Letter 1   |   |
| Attendance meeting |  |   |   |  |   |
| Level 3            | Punctuality reviewed:<br>Escalation to level 3 if student receives 1-3 lates since last review | Tutor continues to reinforce expectations and reward positive behaviour | Report to HoY<br>HoY detentions + phone call home | Punctuality panel 1 with HoY + letter 2 given at meeting | Monitor HoY report closely<br>SLG discussion at weekly business meeting |
| Attendance meeting |  |   |   |  |   |

|                    |  |  |  |   |   |
|--------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| Level 4            | <p>Punctuality reviewed:<br/>Escalation to level 4 if student receives 1-3 lates since last review</p> | <p>Tutor continues to reinforce expectations and reward positive behaviour</p> | <p>HoY continues to reinforce expectations and reward positive behaviour</p> | <p>Punctuality panel 2 with SLG + final warning letter given at meeting</p>   | <p>Phone call home<br/>Detention 1hr after school (BR rota to support)<br/>SLG report</p> |
|                    | <p>Students who go above threshold are worked with on an individual basis by a DHT or the HT</p>       |  |  | <p>Back date 'U' codes in line with policy with HT and AHT approval</p> <p>EPN and individual punctuality plan for following term</p> |   |
| Attendance meeting |  |  |  |   |   |

## Appendix 3

### Student exit interview questionnaire

---

| QUESTION   | NOTES |
|--|-------|
| What have you enjoyed the most about your time at Bentley Wood High School?  |       |
| Which subject / subjects did you feel you learnt and progressed best in? Why   |       |
| Which (if any) subject / subjects did you feel you did not learn or progressed well in? Why  |       |
| Did you take part in any enrichment activities while at Bentley Wood High School? If so which ones?  |       |
| What did you value the most about form time? Why?  |       |
| What is the main reason that you and your family have chosen to leave Bentley Wood High School?  |       |
| Which school are you planning to attend once you leave Bentley Wood High School? (school/college for post 16)  |       |
| For parents only – what are your main reasons for moving your daughter’s school?   |       |
| If you had a magic wand what would you improve about Bentley Wood High School?   |       |
| Parents only – if you are moving what is your new contact address?   |       |
| Parents only – if you are moving has your daughter got a new school place confirmed? If so when was this confirmed and what is the name and address of the new school?                           |       |
| If appropriate:<br>Please be aware that we need to inform the local authority of your intension to move your daughter without a new school place confirmed. The local authorities will carry out |       |

| QUESTION   | NOTES |
|--|-------|
| <p>their own statutory checks before we take your daughter off-role. Do you have any questions or comments regarding this?</p>   |       |
|  |       |
| <p><b>For student intending to move overseas (to be completed with parents)</b></p>  |       |
| <p>Which school will your daughter be attending? Can we please have the address?</p>   |       |
| <p>Who will be looking after your daughter in her new home? Can we please have contact details and a forwarding address / email?</p>   |       |
| <p>Please be aware that we need to inform the local authority of your intension to move overseas. The local authorities will carry out their own statutory checks before we take your daughter off-role. Do you have any questions or comments regarding this?</p> |       |