

Attendance, Registration and Absence Policy

(Whole School)

Attendance

Bristol Grammar School places great emphasis on pupils developing good patterns of attendance. In building a culture of good school attendance, we recognise:

- the importance of good attendance in helping pupils feel part of the BGS community,
- the connections between attendance and pupil welfare, including fulfilling academic potential and attainment, developing good patterns of behaviour, and supporting pupils with particular needs (such as educational needs, medical conditions, disabilities and mental health issues),
- the importance of setting and communicating high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of wider welfare and safeguarding issues.

Whilst attendance is a whole school issue, the Board of Governors has appointed the Deputy Head Safeguarding and the Head of the Infant and Junior School to have overall responsibility for championing good attendance at school. For the purpose of this document, they are known as the School Attendance Champions (SACs). This includes regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it and reviewing historic and emerging patterns across the School.

The School has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and pupils are made aware of these, including that:

- They are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day.
- They are expected to punctually arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons and activities.
- They should not leave a lesson or the school site without permission or otherwise in accordance with expectations.
- Any unexplained absence will be followed up.
- Persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School.
- If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff.

If pupils miss a school day, lesson, or other commitment without a valid reason, then they can expect to have a conversation with their form tutor regarding their absence and potentially disciplinary action to be taken.

The School must provide the Local Authority with names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U).

Children Missing in Education

It is mandatory that children of a compulsory age attend school. 'Children who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.' (DfE Children Missing in Education 2016).

At BGS, we monitor the movement of children as they join or leave the School to try and minimise the risk of the above happening. Any concerns would be reported immediately to the Local Authority. The school also informs the Local Authority if parents decide to 'home school' their children.

At BGS, we work predominantly with four Local Authorities: City of Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

Children Absent from Education

Often children can be persistently absent from school or have prolonged absences. Of course, there may be a satisfactory reason for their absence, most often medical, for why this is needed, for example, the child is having operations/treatments.

However, on other occasions, the child is frequently absent but there does not appear to be a satisfactory reason. This is different from a child being a 'child missing in education' (as described above) but it is still a concern.

As stated above, it is mandatory that children of a compulsory age attend school, but of most importance, frequent absences impact on a child's development across all domains, not purely cognitive.

If a child's absence continues despite interventions to identify and address the underlying cause with both the child and parents, then consideration may be given to seeking advice from the Local Authority in order to support the family. Where pupils are regularly or persistently absent for reasons of mental or physical ill health, special educational needs and/or disabilities, the approach of the School is typically to work closely with the family to firstly understand the precise reasons for absence and the likely timescales involved, to work on a plan for returning to school or increasing attendance, and then to carefully monitor that attendance over time. The School will inform the Local Authority where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days, and work with the family to provide educational provision whilst determining with the Local Authority whether alternative provision should be provided under section 19 of the Education Act 1996, as outlined in statutory guidance.

More information is available in DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance', DfE's 'Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance', and DfE's 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'.

Registration

Registration is required by law at the beginning of each morning session and at the beginning of the first afternoon session.

	Morning registration	Registration closes	Afternoon registration	Registration closes
Infant school	8.30	8.45	12.50	1.00
Junior school	8.30	8.45	1.10	1.20
Senior school	8.30	8.50	1.45	1.55

Registration must be supervised by a member of staff; tutors are expected to attend each morning registration.

Afternoon registers are taken by the staff member teaching the groups for the first period after lunch.

Registration is electronic and is done using the School's information management system, SIMS.

Office staff are responsible for producing the report of absences. This will contain both explained and unauthorised absences. Office staff are also responsible for collating information from parental phone calls, emails and entries on My School Portal and adding to registers as appropriate.

Each morning, office staff make every effort to follow up pupils whose absence is unexplained: they contact teachers to see if a pupil may actually be in lessons; they make phone calls or send a text message to follow up unexplained absences with families. Office staff will also contact parents to ascertain the reason for absence at other times, where possible.

Attendance register symbols and commentary for SIMS

Codes	SIMS Description	DfE description / explanation	Statistical meaning
I	Present (AM)	Present at the school morning session.	Present
I	Present (PM)	Present at the school afternoon session.	Present
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	Attending any other approved educational activity.	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance.	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence - Regulated performance	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence - Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration	Dual registered at another school.	Attendance not required
E	Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision	Authorised absence
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Holiday not granted by the school.	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment).	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence - Interview	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence
K	Alternative provision provided by LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved educational activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register is closed.	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason for absence not yet established.	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised abs	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Participating in a sporting activity.	Approved educational activity
Q	Unable to attend - lack of LA access arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.	Attendance not required
R	Religious observance	Religious observance.	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Arrived in school after registration closed.	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Attending work experience	Approved educational activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Attendance not required
Y1	Unable to attend - Transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.	Attendance not required
Y2	Unable to attend - Widespread travel emergency	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.	Attendance not required
Y3	Unable to attend - Unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.	Attendance not required
Y4	Unable to attend - Unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly	Attendance not required
Y5	Unable to attend - Detention sentence	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.	Attendance not required
Y6	Unable to attend - Public health Guidance/Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.	Attendance not required
Y7	Unable to attend - Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.	Attendance not required
Z	Pupil not on roll	Prospective pupil not on admission register.	Attendance not required
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Planned whole school closure.	Attendance not required

General notes

The master copy of the electronic register (SIMS) is kept centrally (and administered by office staff).

All master copies of registers are held centrally for 7 years.

An electronic back-up copy of the register is made daily

Letters informing the School of future absence or explaining absence should be kept in pupils file by office staff or added to CPOMS under the Attendance tag. Office staff can pre code SIMS in preparation for known future absence.

If pupils are present during registration but are going out of school anytime afterwards, they are still marked as present. Lists of pupils on trips or matches should always be with office staff.

School holidays should be clearly marked.

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardian

- To help promote good attendance habits, including arriving punctually for the start of the school day.
- To inform the School of the reason for an unexpected absence, via My School Portal, on the first day of absence.
- To request leave in advance, parents/guardians should be made via my school portal. School requests that parents/guardians endeavour to avoid booking holidays during term time, as this is disruptive to a child's education.
- To understand that if parents/guardians remove their child without the permission of the School, this absence is unauthorised.
- Should any parent or pupil have any queries about attendance they should contact their child's tutor in the first instance, escalating to a Deputy Head as appropriate.

Responsibilities of Form Teachers

- To complete the registers as early as is possible in each registration session.
- To check email messages or notes from pupils and amend the register as soon as possible to reduce wasted time by reception staff making unnecessary calls.
- To contact parents in relation to lateness in the first instance. If there is not an improvement, contact the schools attendance champions
- To raise other concerns over pupil attendance with schools attendance champions
- Tutors are asked to review overall attendance rates weekly and to follow up possible issues with attendance and to be aware of any potential school refusal or safeguarding concerns which may be affecting a pupil's attendance. Issues are flagged to the relevant school attendance champion.

Responsibility of teaching staff taking register

- To complete the registers as early as is possible in each registration session

Responsibilities for Office staff

- Produce the list of absentees for each session.
- To contact parents of pupils whose absence is not authorised and to amend SIMS accordingly.
- Record late pupils on SIMS using the recommended codes.

Responsibilities of the School Attendance Champions

In line with Government guidance, the Deputy Head Safeguarding and the Head of the infant and Junior School have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed. Both sit on the School's Core Leadership Team and are tasked to:

- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence, making sure they are followed by all staff;
- Ensure school staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the School's policies and procedures;
- Have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the School; and
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the School's strategies and processes.

In addition, the Schools attendance champion will:

- Liaise with the form tutors and other staff regarding levels of absence and necessary follow-up action; if a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, consideration as to next steps will be made, taking into account possible safeguarding implications, as well as the pastoral, parental and disciplinary possibilities, and the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead will be notified.
- Inform the Local Authority of pupils leaving the school roll, in accordance with the government guidance on the regulations which can be found here. In particular, they should ensure that a pupil is not deleted from the school roll until the School and Local Authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts.
- Liaise with the Head of Admissions wherever there are attendance concerns relating to overseas pupils whose visas are sponsored by the School, for consideration of sponsor reporting responsibilities to UKVI.

Date	Last material change	Governors' Approval
September 2024	Policy created	Pending