



# Belmont School Attendance for Learning Policy

**Authorised:** .....  
(Headteacher)

**Authorised:** .....  
(Chair of Governors)

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## **Mission Statement**

Belmont School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise their true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Belmont School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## **Aims**

1. To comply with the Education Act 1996, which lays out the statutory duty of Schools with regard to attendance.
2. To comply with the Gloucestershire County Council Penalty Notice Protocol empowers designated LA officers, Head Teachers (Deputies and Assistants authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from. This takes due regard to all the requirements of the Human Right Act and all Equal Opportunities legislation.
3. To improve the overall percentage of students attending school.
4. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
5. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
6. To ensure parents/guardians are aware of their responsibilities under the above act and to seek their co-operation in the implementation of the Act.
7. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
8. To liaise with the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team who will assist the school and parents of children who have difficulties complying.
9. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
10. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
11. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.

12. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team and with other services and agencies.
13. To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

## **Procedures**

In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- Apply the Whole School Attendance Policy consistently. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality. Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum. Monitor progress in attendance measurable outcomes.
- Produce reports to parents and governors at least annually and additionally as required.
- Publicise attendance figures in newsletters to parents and on the school website.
- Provide training for staff responsible for recording, monitoring and evaluating attendance.
- Register the students twice daily in a tutorial base. This will be completed using the SIMS electronic register during registration periods, morning and afternoon. Office staff will then check and print off a paper copy of the register (for fire procedures) for each tutor group and make any alterations as appropriate.
- Office staff will sign in and register students who are late to school.
- Ask/remind parents to let the school know of reasons for absence on the first day of absence.
- Support and involve parents by providing accurate and up-to-date contact information, setting aside an area and/or time for parents to speak to staff.
- Provide information for parents in a user-friendly way.
- Encourage all parents into school.
- Undertake 'first day' absence calling by the Attendance Officer, or a member of the office staff designated by the Attendance Officer, and send letters home if reasons for absence are not forthcoming.
- Ensure that all Key Stage Leaders oversee attendance for all students within their Key Stage group with support from the attendance officer and a member of SLT
- Designate a member of the Senior Management Team to have responsibility for monitoring and dealing with attendance issues.
- Review attendance figures monthly and weekly and compare them against term/year group trends in order to identify any trends that may be emerging.
- Highlight attendance in: Form tutor time; Assemblies; PSHE, Parents meetings, Annual Review meetings and Pastoral meetings and displays.
- Ensure that whole school attendance is reviewed and monitored at the governors Student Service Committee.
- Any absence requests from parents/carers are to be submitted via an Application for Leave of Absence form to be completed by parents/carers and forwarded to the Headteacher for consideration
- Any pupil who is absent on holiday whether authorised or unauthorised will be provided with core subject (maths and literacy) work or a holiday diary to complete whilst away

**To encourage attendance:**

- The school will set and promote a target for attendance of 100% per term.
- All staff will promote and encourage students in achieving high standards of attendance and punctuality. Display materials supporting the importance of good attendance.
- Students will monitor and record their own attendance weekly during form tutor periods and record it termly using their personal progress files.
- The school will maintain and develop award systems. The school admin team will link with Key Stage managers to support with the management of personal attendance/punctuality targets, termly certificates and awards in Assemblies.
- Amendments to the 2006 regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Attendance compliance is part of the school's home school agreement.
- Parents will be informed termly if their child has achieved the school's Attendance Award for 100% attendance and annually, in the annual written report if a child is absent from school without authorisation from the Headteacher they will be sent a warning letter by the school. This includes sessions where a child has arrived after the school's registration period without an acceptable reason.
- In line with new regulations Belmont will work with the Local Authority on the issuing of penalty fines for parents and carers taking children out of school in unauthorised circumstances. Belmont staff will work with the Local Authority who can issue a Penalty Notice to parents or carers if a child has missed 10 or more sessions over the previous 10 weeks without permission from school. , If there are no unauthorised absences in the next 15 school days no further action will be taken. If there are further unauthorised absences there will be no further warnings and a Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority.
- A regular item on the monthly pastoral staff meeting will refer specifically to students whose attendance is causing concern. Parents will be kept up to date with their statutory obligations with flyers as and when they are made available from the DfE, or via the School Newsletter.

**To promote punctuality:**

- Form tutors will code all students who are late to registration appropriately. They will monitor and review with the student and parents/carers reasons for lateness and use targets to improve.
- Teachers to inform form tutors of lateness to their lessons by students.

**To promote effective partnerships with other services/agencies the school will:**

- Designate key staff for liaison with other agencies (Belmont attendance officer)
- Give priority to timetabled meetings with other agencies
- Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
- Gather and record relevant information to the Education and Entitlement Inclusion Team.
- Hold attendance reviews with key school staff as required.
- Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.
- Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
- Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.
- Hold attendance meetings with parents/carers.

**To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence the school will:**

- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning students.
- Involve/inform all staff in/of reintegration process.
- Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
- Consider peer support and mentoring.
- Involve parents as far as possible.
- Agree timescale for review of any reintegration plan.
- Include relevant agencies, parents and student in reintegration plans.

**Regular Attendance and Unauthorised Absence**

The overall level of attendance that Belmont aims to achieve is 100%, there should be no unauthorised absence. Regular attendance means no unauthorised absence within the last six months and aiming to achieve 100% attendance at school.

Monday through to Friday, pupils are expected to be at school for registration at 8.40. Registration ends at 8.50 and the register will close at 9.10am to allow for any late arrivals. Any pupils arriving up to 9.10am will be recorded as a late code L (before the register closes), this does not impact on their attendance percentage. However any pupil arriving after 9.10am will be recorded as a late code U (after the register closes), this will impact on their attendance percentage and is equivalent to a half day's absence regardless of what time they arrive after 9.10am.

All pupils should attend school for every session available to them, unless the reason for their absence is one that meets the school's criteria for authorising absences, eg illness, non-routine medical/dental appointments, religious observation, education visits and other unavoidable cause.

**Authorised or Unauthorised absences**

Legitimate reasons for absence, including the following, may be authorised by Belmont.

- The Headteacher may authorise a child's absence for illness, but may question too many absence days if your child or children are frequently absent for illness. If your child or children are absent for the reoccurrence of the same illness then school would want to work with you as a family to see if further support and advice can be offered through the School Nurse to enable the ongoing illness to be supported within school.
- Medical or dental appointments (where ever possible these should be arranged outside of school hours).
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement

The following examples of absences will **not** be authorised by Belmont;

- Family Holidays or days out
- Looking after the house
- Looking after brothers and sisters or sick relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays

The Education Regulations 2006 have been amended, and, as from 1st September 2013 **No child may take holidays term time, unless the Headteacher deems there to be exceptional circumstances.**

Any parent taking a child on holiday that has not been deemed an exceptional circumstance can expect to be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice. This will result in a fine to both parents/carers of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid between the 21st day and the 28th day. If the fine is not paid the Local Authority would then proceed to court for the criminal offence of non-school attendance under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice will be issued to the parent/s carer/s that have day –to- day care and responsibility to inform them that: **Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.**

A Parent is defined as per section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and means all natural parents, whether they are married or not and includes any person who, although not a natural parent: Has responsibility for a child or young person. Has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in Education Law

#### **Exceptional circumstances are;**

- Children whose parents/carers are in the armed forces.
- Children, whose parents/carers are dictated by their employer as to when they can take holiday's e.g police, fire service or working for a company that closes between certain dates. (These requests will however need to be accompanied by a letter from the employer as to why the family can only take a holiday during said dates term time)
- A child with a parent/carer or sibling who has a life threatening illness. (This request will need to be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional working with the family, or the request will not be seen as exceptional. The request will not be deemed as exceptional if it is the illness of other extended family members)

Pupils who are Persistently Absent from School for whatever reason will be monitored on a week by week basis. (These pupils are known as P.A. students)

What is a P.A. student?

As of September 2015, this is someone who has an attendance of 90% or lower at any given time during the academic year.

All staff involved with attendance will take into account the time of year and the students' individual circumstances. For example, a letter would not be sent to a student who has a recognised long term illness and contact has already been made with the family.

## **Procedures for Promoting Attendance**

### 1) Teacher/Tutor to monitor punctuality and attendance daily

Tutor to encourage excellent attendance from class. Tutor and Key Stage Leader to discuss if attendance drops below 97%. Monitoring and regular communication with parents / carers until a return to 97% or above. If ongoing concerns and attendance does not return to at least 97% then Tutor links with KSL to coordinate an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) and to share concerns with parents and carers.

### 2) Key Stage Leader to monitor attendance daily for children who have attendance at 90% or below.

Key Stage Leader to send a letter to parents/carers informing them that their child's attendance will be monitored for 3 weeks.

If no improvement then KSL will invite parents into school for a meeting to discuss the attendance concerns. If attendance continues to be concern the school can issue a Warning Letter and hold an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM).

## **Attendance Improvement Meetings**

An Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) is set up to allow parents/carers and students an opportunity to show an improvement in their attendance percentage over a set number of weeks. Initial meeting set up with KSL and member of SLT with /student/parents/carers and any other relevant agency.

During the meeting a target of 100% will be set for the student's attendance and the number of weeks it will be monitored over (usually 4 – 6 weeks)

Review meeting outcomes;

Possible extension if close to target

Second review meeting

Targets met case closed

Targets not met plan failed

Case referred to Gloucestershire Education Performance & Inclusion who will see the legal process through to an Interview Under Caution, this will determine how to proceed and dispose of the offence.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Each term the overall statistics will be monitored against the previous term's figures and the previous year's figures. Attendance is a regular item on the agenda of Middle Leaders meetings and the Governors Student Services Committee. Strategies to address individual attendance issues will be led by the Key Stage leader with support from the Senior Leadership Team. Whole school approaches will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and then recommendations considered by the Governors Student Services Committee.

An Annual review of the attendance policy and procedures will take place normally in the summer term after the annual return to the DfES.

Success of the policy and procedures will be measured by whether we meet our targets at all levels. If there is slippage, then this will be investigated to see if the problem is one over which we can exert some influence, or whether it was as a result of circumstances beyond our control.

Implementation of the policy is seen as the responsibility of all staff. Its use and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on behalf of the Governors.