

Bassingbourn Village College



Attendance Policy

Please read this Policy in conjunction with the Expectations for Learning Policy

College Aim:

To know all our students as individuals. To provide a wide variety of opportunities and experiences through a personalised curriculum and support. To ensure rapid and sustained progress within a kind, caring and close family environment. To nurture individuals to have high aspirations, a love of learning and to become confident, responsible and independent members of society.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

BASSINGBOURN VILLAGE COLLEGE

Introduction:

This is a successful college and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent YOU MUST:

- Contact us as soon as possible on each day of absence; Using the absence phone line (01763242344) or by email (absence@bassingbournvc.net).

If your child is absent we will:

- Endeavour to contact you if we have not heard from you
- Contact you to discuss the situation with the relevant member of staff if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. These absences includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get an attendance mark at Registration
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problem with regular attendance is best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is not a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more school sessions across the school year **for whatever reason authorised AND unauthorised**. Absence at this level may do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and believe in early intervention. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Intervention Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or a Connexions worker, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Contact Details:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers and emails throughout the year.

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any issues together. This is nearly always successful. If attendance difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Officer can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves at the Locality Team Office to ask for help or information. He/she is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. The Locality Team Office number is 01954 283325

Lateness:

It is a legal requirement that your child attends school both regularly and punctually. The school day starts at **8.55am** and the afternoon session starts at **1.40pm**. If your child has a persistent late record the relevant member of staff will contact you to discuss this. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time/Leave of absence:

There is no legal entitlement or right to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term time holiday. In accordance with the national policy term time holidays will not be authorised unless there are exceptional 'one off' circumstances. Please see page 5 and 6 of our Expectations for Learning Policy for the definition of exceptional circumstances. This will be determined by the principal on a case by case basis and all requests must be made in writing two weeks in advance of the student being taken out of school. Parents should be made aware that unauthorised leave of absence may lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service which may result in a Penalty Fine, or legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court. Penalty fines may be given if a student has had repeated periods of unauthorised absence within the last 3 years.

We have been advised that Penalty notices will be issued by the Local Authority for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable

School Targets

All schools set annual attendance targets which are submitted to the Local Authority. Each student has a personal attendance target which is based on their previous record. This is regularly discussed and monitored by the form tutor. Their attendance is recorded on their Progress Check as a cumulative figure.

Good punctuality and attendance is the key to success and we believe our students can be amongst the best in the county.

Be aware that 90% attendance is equivalent to 4 weeks of education missed per year and can affect your child's future.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

The Pastoral teams;

Tutors, College Achievement Leaders and their Assistants.

Miss V Poulter, Vice Principal

Mrs H Edwards, Assistant Principal

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students in order to achieve the highest level of attendance.

Please return this section to Mrs Smith, Principal's PA.

I confirm have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Basingbourn Village College.

Signed:

Child's Name: _____ Tutor Group _____

Year: 7 8 9 10 11 (please circle as appropriate)