

Policy: Sixth Form
Attendance Policy

Approval: Board of Governors

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**CHELtenham
BOURNside
SCHOOL**

Policies

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1. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all students who attend Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form.

2. Key Requirements/Legal Duties:

The department for education (DfE) states that all schools must have an attendance register. By law, all students of non-compulsory school age adopt legal responsibility for their attendance in school and this no longer lies with their parents/carers.

As such there is no legal requirement for sixth forms to use the DfE's attendance and absence codes, but a school reserves the right to use these codes if they wish. As a measure to safeguard our students and to track and monitor their progress effectively, Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form takes the decision to use the nationally recognised attendance codes, and register students' attendance every lesson- including a morning and afternoon session. We are open for the required 190 student school days, unless prevented by extreme weather or other unforeseen exceptional circumstance. In doing so this further supports us in ensuring we comply with EFSA funding guidance for 16-19 provision, that expects 16-19 providers to keep attendance registers to prove that students are participating in the study programme for which they are being funded.

What is compulsory school age?

A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the prescribed day following their 5th birthday. An individual is no longer of compulsory school age after the last Friday in June if they will turn 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

Though the government requires all young people to be in education, employment or training until their 18th birthday, the school leaving age has not been raised.

3. Key principles:

- Students at Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form have the right to the best possible education.
- In order for our students to access the best possible education, a high level of attendance is essential.
- Students' ability to stay and feel safe, enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution to our sixth form may be jeopardised by poor attendance.

4. Context:

At Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form Centre we believe that attending school regularly is one of the foundations of successful learning helping to prepare students for the world of work and adult life. We therefore expect every student to attend school, be punctual and attend all lessons and private study sessions. We believe in working with both the student and the parent/carer to ensure that their child attends school every day and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Bournside endeavours to provide a safe learning environment in which students can feel and be safe, enjoy and achieve. We acknowledge the proven correlation between a high level of attendance and student outcomes. Our Sixth Form Attendance Policy emphasises positive strategies and a range of interventions used to ensure the highest levels of attendance are achieved by our students. However, when normal procedures do not result in good attendance, a range of further measures, including potential removal from the sixth form, may be considered.

5. Aims of the policy:

- Our aim is to encourage and support all sixth form students to attain 100% attendance.
- To raise the profile of the importance of a high level of attendance amongst sixth form students, parents/carers and staff.
- To outline a procedure for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies.
- To eradicate persistent lateness and promote punctuality.

6. Attendance practice:

Improving attendance is a whole school initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents/carers, students and all members of school staff. However, it is noted that although parents/carers are responsible for making sure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education, once students are of a non-compulsory school the responsibility lies with the student.

7. Positive reinforcement:

In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement, Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form uses a range of positive reinforcement strategies:

- Assemblies
- Reinforcement through letters home
- Special awards
- Positive inclusion on their UCAS or leaver's reference.

8. Attendance monitoring and intervention:

Bournside has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance.

- The attendance statistics for every student will be checked and analysed at least fortnightly by the Deputy Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral), Assistant Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral), the Sixth Form Pastoral Intervention Leader (PIL) and tutors.
- Good attendance will receive positive reinforcement in assemblies and through tutors.
- Green and Yellow - The tutor has responsibility for praising students in the Green group and encouraging and supporting improvement for students in the Yellow group through monitoring, dialogue with the student and recognising improvement.
- Amber - The Sixth Form PIL and Deputy Head of Sixth form (Pastoral) will work with tutors to improve attendance
- Pink – The Deputy Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral) and the PIL will works with students directly, and involve parent/carers when necessary in an attempt to improve attendance
- Red – The Head of Sixth Form and PIL will work directly with students and will involve the parents/carers in an attempt to improve

If the interventions above are unsuccessful and/or the student continues to be absent from school, their place in the sixth form may be at risk. If a student has been missing from school for 20 or more consecutive days, we may remove that student from their study programme and ask them to leave our sixth form. In any such case the following 3 conditions will have been fulfilled:

1. At no time was the absence during that period authorised by the school
2. There are no reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause
3. The school has made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the student's whereabouts.

In order to monitor attendance, the Head of Sixth Form, Deputy Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral), Assistant Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral) and their PIL hold regular meetings in which all students are monitored and banded in relation to their attendance percentage. In these meetings the students whose attendance is in the red, pink or amber groups, and those whose attendance is declining, will be reviewed and series of actions to support improvement will be agreed, delegated and recorded.

9. Authorised and unauthorised absence:

If a student is absent, it is vital that they provide good reason. As students are past the compulsory school age this can be provided by the student. However, Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form reserves the right to make contact with parents/carers if we feel an insufficient reason for absence is provided. It is our common practice to check that parents/carers are also aware of absence in order to best safeguard our students.

Students or parents/carers cannot authorise absence. This is a decision which rests with Cheltenham Bournside in accordance with the boundaries set by The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996. When deemed necessary, Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness. We will only authorise absence when there is good cause. If no sufficient reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.

10. Punctuality:

Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form expects all students to arrive at school, registrations and lessons on time. This is a life skill and developing good habits now will set them up for adult life. A sixth form student is deemed late if they arrive at school after 8.40am. Poor standards of punctuality are challenged and result in a 30-minute detention held at the end of the same school day. If a student has a personal circumstance that may result in them being unavoidably late we ask that they speak to Sixth Form Students' Services.

11. Avoiding holidays and appointments during term time:

In order to maximise individual achievement, students should avoid making routine appointments or taking holidays during term time. **Holidays will not be authorised during term time.**

However, we recognise the additional and unique pressures that sixth form students face and ask that if they need to attend an urgent appointment during their non-contact time that they speak to the Head or Deputy Head/s of Sixth Form to grant permission.

12. Compassionate Leave:

If a student wishes to apply for compassionate leave they should apply in writing to the Head of Sixth Form.

13. Supporting and working with parents/carers:

Although we recognise that students in the sixth form have the responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance, it is our strong belief that in order to maximise student achievement and ensure the very best safeguarding procedures, parents/carers play an integral role in supporting us and their child. For this reason, Cheltenham Bournside Sixth Form works to keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and to actively involve them on attendance issues.

This may include:

- Unexplained/unaccounted for absences - phone call or letter asking for reasons
- First day calling and text messaging – if your child fails to arrive at school without notification
- Letters generated for below 90% attendance
- Parental meetings
- Attendance information included on student reports
- Opportunity to meet with the Head or Deputy Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral)

14. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

Working in collaboration with the School Leadership Team, the Head of Sixth Form will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy and review it annually.

15. Responsibilities:

The Governing Body will:

- review the working of the policy
- ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school and is known by sixth form students, parents/carers.

The Headteacher will:

- review the working of the policy
- ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school and is known by sixth form students and parents/carers.
- determine (in collaboration with Head of Sixth Form) whether to authorise any proposed compassionate leave absences that have been requested in writing.

The Head of Sixth Form:

- set attendance targets as part of a Sixth Form Development Plan
- monitor progress of attendance targets in the sixth form
- ensure that strategies are in place to implement the policy throughout the sixth form
- notify parents/carers if a student fails to attend school
- initiate appropriate strategies to improve attendance.

The Deputy Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral) will:

- reward good attendance
- oversee the attendance arrangements for sixth form students
- work with the PIL to ensure the efficient running of the attendance system
- make periodic checks of the registers to monitor student absence – including private study

- ensure that unaccounted-for absences are followed up by getting in touch with the students, or, if required, parents/carers (if there is reasonable concern about a child's welfare, Head of Sixth Form will decide what action to take including informing the relevant external agencies)
- contact parents/carers over student absence patterns where appropriate
- ensure that tutors have access to attendance data/ statistics
- oversee the training of tutors in attendance data/statistics and policy

The Assistant Head of Sixth Form (Pastoral) will:

- make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with
- contact parents/carers over student absence patterns, when appropriate
- meet fortnightly with Deputy Head/s of Sixth Form and PIL to discuss attendance and devise attendance plans for students in Amber, Pink and Red categories
- liaise with the PIL to produce attendance data/statistics for the Head of Sixth Form
- alert the Deputy Head/s of Sixth Form to patterns of absence and truancy.

The Sixth Form PIL will:

- input/check daily attendance figures
- contact parents/carers on the student's first day of absence after registration has closed updating the system throughout the day
- ensure that all student absences are noted and absence notifications received
- monitor and support students in the Amber, Pink and Red groups
- make home visits where appropriate to deal with attendance and safeguarding concerns.

Tutors will:

- reward good attendance
- monitor and support students in the Green and Yellow Group
- ensure that students are registered accurately
- ensure that students provide explanations for their absences and pass these to the PIL
- identify patterns of absence which may be significant
- keep the PIL and/or AHoY informed of any signs of suspected truancy and inform them of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences
- check the attendance of students at their lessons according to the school system.

Parent/carers are required to:

- encourage their children attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- respond to any requests for information from school regarding their child's absence
- give permission for their child to attend any school trips
- not take holidays in term time
- Support your child's request for compassionate leave in writing to the Head of Sixth Form.

Students are required to:

- attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence

- ('attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session)
- if they have been absent ensure that their absence is explained on the day of return
- sign in if late for the school day at Sixth Form Student Services
- ensure they use the biometric scanner or personal pin-code to self-register for their private study periods
- sign into a Sixth Form Study area if their lesson has been cancelled due to staff absence
- ensure that if they leave site at lunchtime they sign out on the biometric scanners or with sixth form student services
- attend all lessons and be in the correct place specified on their timetable.

16. Taking the register:

Registration is carried out during morning tutor time and in our afternoon tutor time, using the Electronic Register. Registers are marked using a set code so that reasons for absence can be quickly established. A high standard of marking is regarded as essential. Staff are regularly given updated instructions on the marking of registers.

Class teachers are required to take a register within the first ten minutes of each lesson, using SIMS. A pattern of attendance for the day can be seen clearly by all staff in every session.

Students must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of this school to register ALL students every session. In addition, all teaching staff must check that the students timetabled to be in their lessons are present for each session. The register must record whether the student is present, absent, or attending an approved educational activity.

An 'approved off-site educational activity' is defined as:

- one taking place off the school premises
- approved by a person authorised by the Headteacher
- supervised by a person approved by the Headteacher
- of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits.

As part of their programme of study sixth form students have allocated and directed private study periods, and curriculum enrichment time. Students can choose to use this time in one of our study centres. Each student is responsible for self-registering, using the sixth form biometric scanners or personalised pin-code, for every session. This must be done within the first 10 minutes of these private study sessions or the present mark will revert to 'late'. These registration marks are imported into SIMS and any missing marks are investigated by our PIL and may be treated as truancy. This protocol is also used in the event of a sixth form lesson being cancelled due to staff absence.

We recognise in the sixth form that students may need to leave school site during the school day for a variety of reasons. If this is the case, students must seek prior approval from the Head or Deputy Head/s of Sixth Form and sign out with the Sixth Form Student Service Team.