BEDFORD SCHOOL

Attendance Policy and Procedure

Applies to	**Whole School**
Endorsed by	Head Master
Responsibility	Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Date reviewed	September 2026
Next review	August 2027

Key School contacts

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1 Aims

1.1 This is the attendance policy of Bedford School (**the School**).

1.2 The School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.

1.3 The aims of this policy are as follows:

1.3.1 to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;

1.3.2 to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;

1.3.3 to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, to reduce absence in order to prevent children becoming children missing education (**CME**), and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;

1.3.4 to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and

1.3.5 to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

2 Scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to the whole School.

2.2 This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.

3 Equality, Inclusion and Reasonable Adjustments

3.1 The School is committed to implementing this policy fairly, consistently and in accordance with the principles of equality, inclusion and pupil welfare.

3.2 The School will not discriminate unlawfully on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

3.3 Where a pupil's attendance is affected by disability, special educational needs, medical needs, mental health needs or other vulnerabilities, the School will consider what reasonable adjustments and supportive measures may be required to reduce barriers to attendance and ensure the pupil is able to access education appropriately.

3.4 Attendance procedures will always be applied proportionately, having regard to the individual circumstances of the pupil.

4 Regulatory framework

4.1 This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

4.1.1 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;

4.1.2 National minimum standards for boarding schools (Department for Education (**DfE**), May 2026);

4.1.3 Education and Skills Act 2008;

4.1.4 Children Act 1989;

4.1.5 Childcare Act 2006;

4.1.6 Sponsorship Duties (UKVI, May 2025);

4.1.7 The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;

4.1.8 Equality Act 2010; and

4.1.9 Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (**UK GDPR**) and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 (together referred to as data protection laws');

4.2 This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

4.2.1 Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance (DfE, July 2026);

4.2.2 Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, August 2024);

4.2.3 Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE, August 2024);

4.2.4 Communicating with parents about school attendance (DfE, June 2026);

4.2.5 Guidance for Parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, July 2024);

4.2.6 "Is my child too ill for school?" guidance (NHS, April 2024);

4.2.7 Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2026);[1]

4.2.8 Children missing education (DfE, September 2025);

4.2.9 Summary table of responsibilities for children missing education (DfE, September 2025);

4.2.10 Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017);

4.2.11 Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024);

4.2.12 Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018);

4.2.13 Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023);

4.2.14 Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023);

4.2.15 Providing remote education: guidance for schools (DfE, updated August 2024); and

4.2.16 SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015).

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4.3 The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:

4.3.1 Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures;

4.3.2 Risk assessment policy for pupil welfare;

4.3.3 Missing child policy and procedures

4.3.4 Policy on special educational needs and learning difficulties;

4.3.5 Behaviour and discipline policy;

4.3.6 School rules;

4.3.7 Terms and Conditions

5 Publication and availability

5.1 This policy is published on the School website.

5.2 This policy will be sent to Parents when pupils join the School and Parents will be reminded of it at the beginning of the school year and when the policy is updated.

5.3 This policy is available in hard copy on request.

5.4 This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

6 Definitions and interpretation

6.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

6.1.1 references to **attendance** include references to attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day.

6.1.2 references to the **Proprietor** are references to the board of Governors.

6.1.3 references to a **Parent** means:

(a) all natural parents, whether they are married or not;

(b) any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil; and

(c) any person who has day to day responsibility for a pupil (i.e. lives with and looks after a pupil).

6.1.4 References to a **pupil** includes anyone who is receiving an education at the school except a person who is 19 or over for whom further education is being provided, or a person for whom part-time education suitable for people over compulsory school age is being provided.

6.1.5 References to **children missing education (CME)** mean children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a School and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at School.

6.1.6 **SAC** means the School's attendance champion

7 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

7.1 The Proprietor has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.

7.2 The Proprietor recognises that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and has appointed a designated senior leader to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in School, referred to in this policy as the SAC.

7.3 The Proprietor will receive regular attendance information, including data relating to persistent absence, severe absence, vulnerable groups and emerging attendance trends. The Proprietor will provide appropriate challenge and assurance regarding the School's attendance arrangements and the effectiveness of attendance improvement strategies.

7.4 To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Proprietor has allocated the following tasks:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Monitoring the implementation of the policy	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Analysing attendance and absence data	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, Parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	SAC	As required, and at least annually
Formal annual review	Proprietor	Annually

8 The importance of good attendance

8.1 The School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:

8.1.1 the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;

8.1.2 the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;

8.1.3 the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and Parents;

8.1.4 that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies;

8.1.5 children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation;

8.1.6 poor attendance, repeated unexplained absence, patterns of absence and children missing education may be indicators of safeguarding concerns including neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, county lines involvement, online harms, mental health difficulties, peer-on-peer abuse or other forms of abuse and harm; and

8.1.7 attendance information should therefore be considered as part of the School's wider safeguarding arrangements and safeguarding culture.

9 School responsibilities

9.1 The School acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the School community.

9.2 The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and Parents.

9.3 The School will:

9.3.1 communicate attendance expectations clearly at the start of each academic year;

9.3.2 provide information and resources to support attendance, including guidance on illness-related absence;

9.3.3 contact parents promptly where attendance concerns arise;

9.3.4 seek to understand and address barriers to attendance before concerns become entrenched; and

9.3.5 keep attendance information under regular review and share concerns with parents where appropriate.

9.4 The School will communicate with parents / guardians and carers about attendance in a supportive, respectful and non-judgmental manner. The School recognises that effective attendance is most likely to be achieved where the School and families work in partnership to identify and address barriers to attendance at an early stage.

9.5 Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

9.6 The School operates a graduated attendance support process designed to identify concerns early and work collaboratively with pupils and families to address barriers to attendance. Attendance data is reviewed regularly and, where attendance falls below

the School's expected thresholds, parents/carers may be contacted to discuss any factors affecting attendance and to ensure appropriate support is in place.

9.7 Where attendance concerns persist or attendance continues to decline, a more formal review may be undertaken involving relevant pastoral staff, including the Tutor, Housemaster, Head of Year, Attendance Champion or other appropriate senior staff. This may include a meeting with parents/carers to explore barriers to attendance, agree supportive interventions and review progress.

9.8 The School's approach is supportive and child-centred. Attendance concerns will be considered in the context of the individual pupil's circumstances, including any medical, pastoral, safeguarding, SEND or wellbeing factors. Interventions will be proportionate, reviewed regularly and focused on enabling pupils to attend school consistently and successfully.

Attendance as a Safeguarding Matter

9.9 The School recognises attendance as both an educational and safeguarding issue.

9.10 Attendance information will be considered alongside safeguarding information where appropriate. Attendance patterns may be reviewed in conjunction with safeguarding records, pastoral concerns, behavioural concerns, mental health concerns and information received from external agencies.

9.11 Where attendance concerns indicate possible safeguarding risks, the matter will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

9.12 The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

9.13 The School will seek to ensure that attendance communications:

9.13.1 are timely, clear and accessible;

9.13.2 explain why attendance matters for educational progress, wellbeing and safeguarding;

9.13.3 encourage constructive dialogue with families;

9.13.4 take account of individual circumstances and any known barriers to attendance; and

9.13.5 focus on identifying support and solutions wherever possible.

9.14 The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance, those at risk of becoming CME, and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

10 Staff responsibilities

The SAC

10.1 The Proprietor has appointed a senior member of staff of the School's leadership team as SAC to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Details of the individual appointed are at the front of this policy and are widely publicised within School.

10.1.1 The SAC's responsibilities are:

(a) to set a clear vision for improving attendance in school;

(b) to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;

(c) to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;

(d) to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and

(e) to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and Parents.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

10.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will work closely with the SAC and other pastoral leaders to ensure that attendance concerns are considered within the School's wider safeguarding arrangements.

10.3 The DSL should:

10.3.1 receive information regarding significant attendance concerns where safeguarding risks may be present;

10.3.2 review attendance information relating to pupils who are the subject of safeguarding concerns;

10.3.3 support multi-agency working where attendance concerns are linked to safeguarding concerns;

10.3.4 contribute to attendance support planning where safeguarding concerns are identified; and

10.3.5 maintain oversight of pupils who may be at risk of becoming children missing education.

Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance:

10.4 The staff identified in Appendix 1 of this policy have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:

10.4.1 have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon;

10.4.2 record all absences promptly and accurately using the processes specified;

10.4.3 seek explanations of absences required from pupils on their return to School;

10.4.4 make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupil to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School;

10.4.5 look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SAC of any specific concerns;

10.4.6 deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;

10.4.7 consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the School's behaviour and discipline policies; and

10.4.8 discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and Parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance.

All staff

10.5 The School ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and Parents about it.

10.6 The School provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

11 School arrangements

11.1 The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers must be kept electronically. Contact details of relevant staff can be found at the front of the policy and other details about the School's arrangements can be found in Appendices Appendix 1-Appendix 4.

12 Monitoring attendance

Persistent and Severe Absence

12.1 For monitoring purposes the School adopts the current Department for Education definitions.

12.2 Persistent absence generally refers to a pupil who misses 10% or more of their possible sessions.

12.3 Severe absence generally refers to a pupil who misses 50% or more of their possible sessions.

12.4 Attendance monitoring will include consideration of both persistent and severe absence, with additional support provided where appropriate.

12.5 The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:

12.5.1 monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;

12.5.2 using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);

12.5.3 undertaking frequent individual level analysis to identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeting actions for those cases;[2]

12.5.4 conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;

12.5.5 benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional and national attendance levels and the performance of similar schools, to identify areas of focus for improvement;

12.5.6 devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;

12.5.7 monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented;

12.5.8 providing data and reports to the Proprietor to support its work;

12.5.9 reviewing attendance patterns of vulnerable pupils and groups, including young carers, pupils with a social worker, pupils with SEND and pupils with long-term medical conditions;

12.5.10 identifying any emerging safeguarding concerns linked to attendance patterns; and

12.5.11 monitoring attendance information alongside safeguarding information where appropriate.

13 Pupil responsibilities

13.1 School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The School therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance.

13.2 Pupils should be aware that:

13.2.1 they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each School day;

13.2.2 they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;

13.2.3 they should not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with School rules;

13.2.4 they should engage with the School's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;

13.2.5 any unexplained absence will be followed up;

13.2.6 persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School. This may take the form of:

(a) offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;

(b) communication with Parents/ Guardians;

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(c) reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and

(d) sanctions against them or their Parents in line with the School's behaviour policies including attendance / punctuality report card.

13.2.7 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, although the School encourages them to speak to their Tutor / Head of Year (PS) / Housemaster (US) or those staff identified in Appendix 1 in the first instance. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

13.2.8 For pupils sponsored under UKVI regulations, attendance must not fall below 80%, nor should there be 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence. In such cases, the School will investigate the reasons for absence and may be required to report the matter via the Sponsor Management System (SMS), in line with UKVI sponsor guidance.

14 Additional needs

14.1 The School recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

14.2 Particular attention will be given to attendance patterns of pupils who may be vulnerable to poor attendance outcomes, including:

14.2.1 pupils with a social worker;

14.2.2 pupils subject to child protection plans;

14.2.3 pupils subject to child in need plans;

14.2.4 looked-after children;

14.2.5 previously looked-after children;

14.2.6 young carers;

14.2.7 pupils known to youth justice services;

14.2.8 pupils with SEND;

14.2.9 pupils with medical needs; and

14.2.10 pupils experiencing mental health difficulties.

14.3 The School will seek to work collaboratively with parents, local authorities and relevant agencies to ensure that attendance support is coordinated and proportionate.

14.4 The School will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.

14.5 It will also work with Parents / Guardians, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupils education, health and care plan is accessed.

14.6 Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan the School will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

14.7 Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

14.8 Where barriers are outside of the School's control, the School will work with Parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

14.9 The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

15 Parent / carer responsibilities

15.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

15.2 This means pupils must attend every day that the School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the School.

15.3 The School will help Parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.

15.4 The School is committed to working collaboratively with parents where attendance concerns arise. Parents are encouraged to discuss any barriers to attendance with the School at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support can be considered.

15.5 Expectations the School places on Parents can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy

15.6 Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.

16 Training

16.1 **Staff:** The School ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:

16.1.1 the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and

16.1.2 the School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.

16.2 Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This should include:

16.2.1 the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;

16.2.2 the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;

16.2.3 the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data; and

16.2.4 any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

16.3 The School maintains written records of all staff training.

17 Information sharing

17.1 Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

17.2 The School, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms).

17.3 Where enquiries following the absence of a pupil lead the School to reasonably believe that the child will not return, and no alternative provision has been confirmed by the parent, the School will make a referral to the child's home local authority CME team without delay.

17.4 Where appropriate the School will attend regular targeting support meetings.

17.5 The School is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

17.5.1 New pupil and deletion returns;

17.5.2 Attendance returns;

17.5.3 Sickness returns.

17.6 The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of the School's registers.

17.7 The School must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State. The School meets this requirement by having an electronic management information system (iSAMS) containing the required information that can be accessed by the DfE. The School also uses this tool to monitor pupil level attendance and understand trends in attendance patterns.

17.8 Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and / or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

18 Record keeping and confidentiality

18.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

18.2 The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.

Appendix 1 School arrangements

1 Managing attendance

1.1 The School monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils, promote attendance and prevent children becoming CME. It accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law and set out in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 respectively. The admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically and retained by the School for the relevant time period as stated by law.

1.2 The School expects all pupils to be present at School for the whole of the School day, (including Saturdays in Years 6 to Upper Sixth) usually from morning registration at 8.40am to close at 4.15pm, but this period may be extended, for example for out of school clubs, sports fixtures or school trips.

2 The role of Parents / carers

2.1 The School expects all Parents to:

2.1.1 make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity;

2.1.2 notify the School of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this;

2.1.3 notify the School in writing if their child will no longer attend the School after a certain day and supply information to the School about how their child will be continuing to receive suitable education; and

2.1.4 cooperate with the School to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.

2.2 Parents of day pupils should ensure their child attends School for morning registration;

2.3 Parents of boarding pupils should ensure their child returns to their boarding accommodation by the times set out in the relevant Boarding House handbook. If return to school is delayed for any reason, boarders should immediately telephone their Housemaster.

3 Registration and attendance checks

3.1 Morning registration is at 8.40am and afternoon registration is at 2.15pm. Registers are taken at the same time for all registered pupils in the Prep School and the Upper School, including pupils on part-time timetables, phased returns or other individual arrangements.

3.2 Attendance registers will be taken at the designated registration times for all pupils within the relevant registration session. Registers will be maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current Department for Education guidance.

3.3 Each register will remain open for 30 minutes from the start of registration. This period is the same for every session.

3.4 Once the morning and afternoon registers close, a pupil will be recorded as absent if not present in the classroom / lesson.

3.5 If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed they will be recorded as a late arrival (code L).

3.6 If a pupil arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session without a satisfactory explanation e.g. because of an unavoidable cause, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reasons given / not given will be recorded.

4 Reporting absence

Prep School

4.1 If a pupil is to be absent from School for illness or injury, the parent / carer should notify the school by using the Reporting Absence - illness or injury feature on My School Portal. Parents can also call Prep Reception on 01234 362274 in emergencies. It is very helpful if parents let us know before 8.45am so that we can notify all necessary staff of a pupil's absence.

Upper School

4.1 If a pupil is to be absent from School for illness or injury, the parent / carer should notify the school by emailing bellroomabsences@bedfordschool.org.uk or calling the Bell Room on 01234 362200. It is very helpful if parents let us know before 8.45am so that we can notify all necessary staff of a pupil's absence.

4.2 Where a pupil is ill, the School should be notified of the nature of the illness.

4.3 Where illness is cited as a reason for absence, the School may refer parents to current NHS guidance on whether a child is well enough to attend school.

4.4 The School does not routinely ask for medical evidence for illness-related absence and does not operate a blanket rule requiring it. Medical evidence may be requested where the School has genuine and reasonable doubt about whether an illness is authentic, or where a pupil has a prolonged or repeated pattern of illness, or health needs that are complex, long-term or frequently recurring. In these cases evidence helps the School understand the pupil's needs, consider reasonable adjustments, identify suitable provision and record absence accurately.

5 Arrangements for reporting subsequent absence

5.1 Absence will be recorded on the Attendance Register as set out in Appendix 4.

6 Managing absence

6.1 Parents are expected to contact the School on each day of absence to explain the reason. Where a pupil is absent and no reason has been given, the Prep Reception or Bell Room will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence. If the absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure the pupil is safe and, where relevant, the pupil's social worker or youth offending team worker will be informed. Where an absence is recorded as unexplained, the correct code will be

entered as soon as the reason is established and no later than 5 working days after the session. If there are concerns about absence a pupil's Tutor, Housemaster, Head of Year will then contact parents/carers to understand the circumstances and arrange appropriate support or use of the school behaviour policy.

6.2 Parents are asked to provide more than one emergency contact number for each pupil wherever possible, so the School has more than one way of reaching a responsible adult.

6.3 The School will keep parents regularly informed of their child's attendance. This information will be given in terms of time missed and its effect on learning rather than headline percentages.

Graduated Attendance Support Process

6.4 The School will generally adopt a graduated approach to attendance support:

6.4.1 **Stage 1 - Early Identification**

(a) Attendance concern identified.

(b) Monitoring initiated.

(c) Informal engagement with pupil and parents/carers.

6.4.2 **Stage 2 - Attendance Review**

(a) Attendance concern formally reviewed.

(b) Barriers identified.

(c) Supportive interventions agreed.

6.4.3 **Stage 3 - Attendance Support Meeting**

(a) Meeting involving relevant pastoral staff and parents/carers.

(b) Attendance targets agreed.

(c) Review arrangements established.

6.4.4 **Stage 4 - Enhanced Support**

(a) Involvement of the Attendance Champion, DSL and/or external agencies where appropriate.

(b) Multi-agency support considered.

(c) Additional safeguarding or welfare interventions implemented where required.

Legal intervention and penalty notices

6.5 Legal intervention applies only to pupils of compulsory school age and is used only where support has not worked or has not been engaged with, or where support would not be appropriate (for example, an unauthorised holiday in term time). Each case is considered individually, with regard to the School's safeguarding duties.

6.6 The School will refer such cases to the local authority. The local authority may then take action in line with the DfE National Framework for penalty notices and its local code of conduct. Action may include a Notice to Improve, a penalty notice or, as a last resort, prosecution. A penalty notice may be considered where the national threshold is met. The threshold is currently 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Details of how penalty notices operate in Bedford Borough are set out in Appendix 5.

7 Authorised absences

7.1 Authorised absence means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

8 **Applications for an authorised leave of absence**

8.1 Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the School day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing and will only be considered if made using the 'General Leave Request' form submitted at least three days before a proposed absence.

8.2 The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request. The School does not operate blanket policies under which leave of absence is granted automatically in response to particular circumstances or events. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

8.3 Apart from illness or where there are additional needs, no pupil should be away from School without prior permission from the Headmaster (Prep School) or Vice Master (Upper School).

8.4 We expect all pupils (including international boarders) to keep full terms and not leave early for Exeat or holidays. For the avoidance of doubt, early departure or late arrival for flights home or for holiday, do not constitute acceptable grounds for authorising absence and such requests will not be granted. Term dates are published on the website a year in advance.

8.5 Dental or medical appointments should be made during School holidays except in cases of emergency when the 'Medical Leave of Absence' form should be submitted for consideration.

8.6 If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headmaster or Vice Master to determine the length of the time the pupil is or was permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an authorised absence. See section 3 of Appendix 4 for more details.

8.7 A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which Parents belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

9 **Reporting duties**

9.1 The School is legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

9.1.1 **New Pupil and Deletion returns:** notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.

9.1.2 **Attendance returns:** providing the local authority with the 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).

9.1.3 **Attendance Review:** The School has clear procedures in place to notify parents/carers when attendance falls below the expected thresholds, and to support families in improving pupil attendance.

9.1.4 **Sickness returns:** providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

9.2 In the event that a pupil holding a Student or Child Student visa sponsored by the School under the Points Based System goes missing, the School will report to UKVI if the pupil misses ten consecutive expected contact points.

9.3 Each time the School's attendance register is completed it is treated as a contact point for these purposes.

9.4 The report will be made by the School's Level 1 user via the Sponsor Management and in accordance with prevailing UKVI guidance

9.5 Action will also be taken in accordance with the Missing child policy and safeguarding and child protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare. This includes referring any concerns about a pupil to local children's social care services and instigating a police welfare check where necessary.

9.6 Where repeated unexplained absence, persistent absence, severe absence or children missing education concerns indicate a potential safeguarding risk, the School will take appropriate action, including referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where necessary, external agencies.

Appendix 2 National attendance and absence codes

1 On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil whose name is listed in the admission register at the time (with the exception of a pupil who is a boarder).

2 Attending the school

Code	Definition
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session / afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed

3 Attending a place other than school

Code	Definition
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity

4 Absent - leave of absence

Code	Definition
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

5 Absent - other authorised reasons

Code	Definition
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes

R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded

6 Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Code	Definition
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause (including non-payment of fees)

7 Absent - unauthorised absence

Code	Definition
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

8 Administrative codes

Code	Definition
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Appendix 3 Admission register

1 Admission register

1.1 In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the School will:

1.1.1 maintain an admission register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the School (also known as the school roll); and

1.1.2 inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points.

1.2 The admission register must be kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

1.3 The school must ensure that every entry in the School's admission register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.

1.4 The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding Parents and carers and details of the school they last attended and whether each pupil of compulsory school age is a boarder or day pupil.

1.5 A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted.

1.6 Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the School must provide it with the following information:

1.6.1 the full name of the pupil;

1.6.2 the address of the pupil;

1.6.3 the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;

1.6.4 at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;

1.6.5 the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;

1.6.6 name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;

1.6.7 the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Appendix 4 Attendance register

1 Attendance register

1.1 The School records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) including boarders in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024

1.2 The School uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations.

1.3 The attendance register is kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

1.4 The School will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and Parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched and in order to prevent children becoming CME.

1.5 The School is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

1.6 On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:

1.6.1 physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or

1.6.2 absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or

1.6.3 attending a place other than the school; or

1.6.4 absent.

1.7 The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:

1.7.1 attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;

1.7.2 for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;

1.7.3 attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;

1.7.4 attending an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education;

1.7.5 attending a place for any other approved educational activity.

2 Recording absence

2.1 Absence will be recorded in accordance with the national absence codes set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024 and statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance relating to:

2.1.1 leaves of absence;

2.1.2 other authorised reasons;

2.1.3 unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause;

2.1.4 unauthorised absence.

3 Remote education

3.1 The School is required to record all absence from in-person lessons.

3.2 The School may, in limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils, who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the School site, to keep pace with their education. It should be noted that remote education will not be in the form of "live" lessons, but will be the provision of learning resources.

3.3 In the limited circumstances when the School decides to use remote education for individual pupils when they are absent, the following will be considered:

3.3.1 ensuring mutual agreement of remote education by the School, Parents or carers, potentially pupils, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional. If the pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision;

3.3.2 ensuring remote education is used only as part of a plan to reintegrate the pupil back to school, with a formal arrangement in place to review its efficacy regularly, alongside identifying what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help ease the pupil back to school at the earliest opportunity;

3.3.3 setting a time limit within which the period of remote education provision should be reviewed, with the aim that the pupil returns to in person education with the required support in place to meet their needs.

3.4 Pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. The School will keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register. Where appropriate, this information may be used to make plans for a pupil's reintegration to school.

3.5 Remote education is not a substitute for regular school attendance and will be used only as a last resort, after reasonable adjustments and other support have been explored, where a pupil is unable to attend school in person but remains well enough to engage with education.

3.6 Before prolonged remote education arrangements are implemented, the School will consider whether reasonable adjustments, phased returns, attendance support plans or alternative support strategies may enable the pupil to return to in-person education at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

3.7 The School will utilise a digital education platform that will be kept up-to-date and keep pupils safe. Staff will remain trained and confident in its use.

4 Unauthorised absence

4.1 The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance or where no explanation has been given meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate. Examples include:

4.1.1 holiday has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Head Master (Prep School) or the Vice Master (Upper School);

4.1.2 the reason for absence has not been provided;

4.1.3 a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;

4.1.4 a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

Appendix 5 Penalty notices in Bedford Borough

1 Local arrangements

1.1 Bedford School is in Bedford Borough. Penalty notices for school absence are issued under Bedford Borough Council's Local Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices, which follows the DfE National Framework for Penalty Notices. This appendix summarises how that code applies to pupils at the School. Where this appendix and the Council's code differ, the code applies.

1.2 Bedford Borough Council's Inclusion and Welfare Service decides whether to issue a penalty notice, in consultation with the School. The School may ask the Inclusion and Welfare Service to issue a penalty notice. Any request must include evidence that appropriate support was offered to the pupil and family before the referral.

1.3 A penalty notice can only be issued for unauthorised absence of a pupil of compulsory school age.

2 When a penalty notice may be considered

2.1 A penalty notice may be considered when a pupil has at least 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within 10 school weeks. The 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

2.2 A penalty notice may be appropriate where a pupil has unauthorised leave of absence in term time, where a pupil is found out of school during school hours and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, or where the School or the Inclusion and Welfare Service believes a penalty notice may lead to improved attendance, for example in cases of persistent late arrival after the register has closed.

2.3 In an individual case, the local authority may issue a penalty notice before the national threshold is met if it considers this appropriate.

3 Notice to Improve

3.1 Except in exceptional circumstances, parents will receive a Notice to Improve before a penalty notice is issued. This is a final opportunity to engage with support. Parents will have up to 30 school days to show improvement, which means no further unauthorised absence during that period unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3.2 A Notice to Improve is not issued for unauthorised leave of absence in term time. In these cases a penalty notice may be issued without prior warning.

4 Amounts, limits and payment

4.1 A penalty notice is issued to each parent with parental responsibility, for each child concerned.

4.2 The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a pupil is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.

4.3 A second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same pupil within three years is £160, payable within 28 days, with no reduction for early payment.

4.4 No more than two penalty notices will be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within three years. If the national threshold is met a third time in that period, the local authority will consider other action, which will often be prosecution.

4.5 There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice. The local authority may withdraw a notice only in limited circumstances, for example if it was issued to the wrong person, did not follow the code of conduct or contains a material error. Non-payment will normally lead to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

5 Further information

5.1 Further information is available from Bedford Borough Council's Education Welfare Service, and the full Local Code of Conduct is published on the Council's website. The Council may revise its code, and the current published version applies.