



Attendance and Registration Policy

This policy applies to all pupils at Bishop's Stortford College including those in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It takes into account the Department for Education statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (February 2024). Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)

The Law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly (Education Regulations, 2024). This means their child 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. Excellent school attendance promotes high attainment and protects vulnerable pupils. All schools, including independent schools, local authorities, and other local partners work jointly where necessary and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupils (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions). Collaborative working is legally required to share information from registers with the local authority, and to work with local School Attendance Support Teams where appropriate.

Attendance and Punctuality

The Department for Education defines 'persistent absenteeism' as cases where school attendance falls below 90%. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly to access their entitlement to a full-time education. All schools, including independent schools, are required to take action should a pupil's attendance become a cause for concern. As an independent school we are responsible for the attendance of pupils on our roll and have a duty to follow up on all instances of non-attendance and take reasonable steps to address poor attendance, working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance. If a pupil has irregular attendance or is absent continuously without authorisation for ten school days, we are required to notify the local School Attendance Support Team at Hertfordshire Children's Services. Where persistent absenteeism persists above 10%, access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and formalise support in conjunction with the Local Authority. With this in mind, the Deputy Head (pastoral) in Senior School and Prep School, and Pre-Prep Head will monitor attendance figures regularly and communicate with parents where there is a cause for concern. In cases where attending school full-time presents a challenge, part-

time timetables may be agreed as a temporary measure for the shortest time possible until barriers to attendance are removed and pupils are re-engaged with full time schooling. Where necessary, additional pastoral care may be agreed to plan a time limited phased return to school. In cases of severe absence, or where the child is more absent than present, the College will work with families, and relevant services to overcome the barriers to being in school. In cases where pupils are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school), there is likely to be a need for more intensive support across a range of partners and services which may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan. It may also include consideration for an Education, Health and Care Plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect and may result in a full children’s social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance, “Keeping Children Safe in Education”.

Persistent and severe absence

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), school and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage those pupils. For severely absent pupils who are absent more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school), more intensive support across a range of partners work together to provide priority support. This may include specific support with attendance of family support. It may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities and other partners, and the appropriate educational support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons persists, it is likely to constitute neglect and may be referred to local children’s social care. If pupils have a health condition that is likely to result in 15 days of absence from school, either consecutively or cumulatively, then we are required to notify the local authority.

Attendance codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
C	Exceptional Circumstances
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or work abroad
C2	Part-Time Timetable
D	Dual registered
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
G	Family holiday
I	Illness
J1	Interview

K	Attending education provision arranged the local authority
L	Late
M	Medical/Dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Parent travelling/mobile child
U	Late after 08.30am
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work Experience
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided by school not being available
Y2	Widespread travel disruption
Y3	Part of school premises closed
Y4	Whole school unexpectedly closed
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to other cause
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	School closed to pupils

The Registers

The Senior School, Prep School and Pre-Prep registers are completed electronically on ISAMS and collated centrally in the respective School Offices, where details of absences, pupils attending music lessons, learning support lessons or medical appointments during the day are centrally recorded for staff information. The electronic registers are backed up monthly and stored away from the original entries. Pupils are expected to be on time to all registration sessions and punctuality is monitored in addition to attendance.

The attendance register is completed at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. Registers will remain open for 30 minutes after registration periods begin. After that time, an unauthorised absence code will be used with the reason established as soon as possible. Regular lateness to school will be monitored and parents informed where there are patterns or trends that raise concern. Punctuality is very important to learning.

The attendance register is a legal document which shows whether a pupil is present, absent, or has authorised absence due to illness, medical appointments, approved educational or sporting activity, work experience or other exceptional circumstances, such as a bereavement or religious observance. If no reason is established for absence when a register is taken, code N is used until the reason is established. The College follows the Department for Education set of codes for schools to use in registers. If no reason is established for absence, code 'N' is used in the register at first and is later corrected (ideally within two weeks). Code 'N' does not remain indefinitely.

Leave of absence requests and medical appointments

Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and when requested in advance. This means that it is unlikely that leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

We ask that parents try to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, we ask that the pupil is only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Fire practice or emergencies

In the event of a fire, fire practice or other emergency, the priority of the teachers is to evacuate their pupils safely, quickly, and quietly to assemble at the fire point. The teacher takes a register for their class.

Arrangements in the Senior School

All pupils must be registered for the morning and afternoon sessions each day Monday to Friday. Registers must indicate whether a pupil is present, absent, attending an approved educational activity outside school, unable to attend through exceptional circumstances, taking authorised absence or taking unauthorised absence.

Formal electronic registration will take place in Houses twice per day at 08:20am and afternoon 2.30pm. If pupils are not present when their name is called but they arrive within 30 minutes of the register being taken, they will be marked as Late. If they arrive after that time, they will be registered as an unauthorised absence for that session until the reason for their absence is ascertained. Pupils arriving after 08.30 am must sign-in immediately upon arrival at School House main reception.

Parents should email the relevant House staff and the absence line for unplanned absences (absence@bishopsstortfordcollege.org) as soon as possible on the day of absence.

After 10.00 am on the morning of absence, parents / guardians will be contacted via text message or phone if their child is unaccounted for, i.e. they are not absent by pre-arrangement, they have not been registered in House and they have not signed in a main reception.

Should parents have failed to inform us of an absence for any reason, they should telephone Reception (Tel: 01279 838575) as soon as possible to avoid being contacted unnecessarily.

Pupils who know that they are due to miss a registration session because of a College activity (eg. Choir, fixtures etc.), must notify their teacher in advance.

If a pupil is admitted to the Medical Centre, and as a result misses one or more lessons, activities or games, the parents (or Housemaster/Housemistress in the case of boarders) will be informed by the Medical Centre.

Arrangements in the Prep School

Pupils are expected in their form rooms by 8.20am for morning registration. This is usually done by the Form Tutor or the Head of Year. They make a note of absences or other appointments during the day (Learning Support, Music lessons etc.). Pupils who arrive after 8.20am will be marked as late if they arrive within 30 minutes of the register closing. After that, pupils will be registered as unauthorised absence until the reason for their absence is established. Pupils who are late should sign in at the Prep School Office.

Parents are expected to phone the Prep School Office before 9.15 am if pupils are ill or unable to attend school.

Cross checks of unexplained absences are completed once the registers have arrived in the Office by visiting the teaching rooms. A member of staff in the Prep School Office sends a text to parents whose children are still unaccounted for after this check has taken place. These are followed up by a telephone call if no reply is received.

Registration in the afternoon is completed at 1.25 pm from Monday to Friday in Shell. In Form One to Upper Third, afternoon registration will take place between 1.25pm and 1.30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, afternoon registration will take place during period 4, the lesson before lunch.

When pupils are involved in any day trip off site, the Prep School Office Staff are kept informed of those pupils and staff involved with the correct marking system being added to the electronic registers. Lists of those pupils involved in fixtures can be found on the SOCS website. This information should be used by Form Tutors or those deputising for them, and taking afternoon registrations, in order to make accurate registrations for the afternoon sessions.

On Wednesdays, for pupils from Form One to Upper Third, staff taking games lessons, or teams to fixtures, are able to check 3Sys or the SOCS website for up-to-date information to confirm pupils' attendance.

Pupils who leave the premises during the school day are required to sign out at the Prep School Office.

Arrangements in the Pre-Prep (Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1)

Registration takes place twice a day – by 8.30 am and at 1.15 pm. The electronic registers are backed up monthly and stored away from the original entries.

The parents of pupils who are absent are required to phone or email the Pre-Prep Office before registration explaining the absence. If no information about an absent child has been received by 09.00am, the Pre-Prep Secretary contacts the parents/carers. Pupils who are late are signed in by their parents/carers at the Pre-Prep Office.

Teachers inform the Pre-Prep Secretary if they are taking their pupils out of the Pre-Prep site for a “non-timetabled” activity, such as a nature walk on the College fields.

Medical Centre

If a pupil is admitted to the Medical Centre, the parents/carers are notified by the Pre-Prep Secretary. Parents collect their child from the Medical Centre and the Medical Centre notify the Pre-Prep Office.