



SIR THOMAS BOTELER

CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

THROUGH GOD, WE CARE

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Policy Title: Attendance Policy

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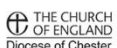
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PART OF THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST

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• HIGH EXPECTATIONS | HIGH ASPIRATIONS | HIGH STANDARDS | YOU WILL SUCCEED

Rationale:

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential.

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School is committed to providing all students with the best possible start in life and will work hard to ensure that all students attend school regularly. We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome, allowing individuals to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

The aims of this policy are:

- To promote good attendance and punctuality for all students with all stakeholders
- To enable all students to have full access to the curriculum through regular attendance
- To intervene and challenge all students who require the necessary support to achieve good attendance
- To meet targets set by the LA regarding attendance and to drive school attendance beyond national averages.

We are committed to tackling poor attendance because:

- Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, leading to underachievement and low attainment
- Students with poor attendance will have gaps in their learning
- Poor attendance will hinder the students' ability to develop friendship groups
- We want to make sure students are safe
- We want to increase students' opportunities.

'Through God, We Care' and values all students; we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Attendance targets

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets for the new academic year. These will reflect both national and Warrington attendance targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. For the academic year 2023/24, the school attendance target is 96%.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

The law:

- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance or otherwise.
- A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and, where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- The Education (student registration) (England) Regulations 2006, requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the student was:
 - Present
 - Absent
 - Present at approved educational activity; or
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governors of the school are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Working alongside Senior Leaders in monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

The designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families.

The Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Mr J Leonard and can be contacted via jleonard@boteler.org.uk.

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- The daily monitoring and analysing of attendance data
- The daily management of attendance on the school system
- Working with students and families to ensure the removal of barriers preventing school attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Liaising with members of staff regarding the actions and intervention to reduce absence from school
- Working with the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence and raise school attendance.

The Attendance Officer is Mr D Willcock and can be contacted via dwillcock@boteler.org.uk.

Parental responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal obligation to educate their children and can be prosecuted if they do not meet this obligation
- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child arrives to school promptly each day - the school, in loco-parentis, is responsible for the child from the start of the school day
- Parents/Carers must contact the school on the first day of absence if the school has not previously been informed and maintain daily contact should the absence continue
- Parents must avoid taking holidays in school time or, if they cannot do so, must apply to the Headteacher for permission in advance.

The school requests that parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress

- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance with the home environment
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school, taking every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school and acknowledging the importance of children receiving consistent messages from both school and home.

School responsibilities:

- The school will enable all students to achieve their full potential and expect regular attendance to best prepare them for life after school
- The school will inform parents in cases of known truancy
- The school will make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence when no initial contact is received
- In the case of absence due to prolonged illness the school will provide work in liaison with parents/carers
- When the number or frequency of absences gives cause for concern the appropriate intervention will take place between school, parents and the Local Authority
- Persistent lateness will be challenged and parents will be contacted regarding the concerns.

The school will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with parents and students
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance
- Ensure effective teaching and learning experiences take place to encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site, are implemented.

The school requests that students will:

- Attend school every day
- Arrive in school and to class on time
- Remain in class unless given permission to leave
- Remain in school unless given permission to leave
- Catch up with missing work following absence.

Monitoring students' attendance:

- When a student is absent, it is expected that the parents/carers will contact the school. Where this is not the case, the school will aim to contact parents/carers by 9.30am to establish the reason for absence and if the child is safe. We will also use a system called 'Truancy Call' on a student's first day of absence if no contact has been made. Truancy Call is a text messaging system which parents/carers can respond to
- If it is the case where a member of staff cannot make contact home and the school is unsure whether the child is safe, a home visit for specifically identified students may be arranged
- Should absence continue and patterns emerge, then the Attendance Officer will work with the Pastoral team to develop a strategy to improve attendance for specific students
- If truancy is identified, parents/carers will be notified via a phone call and/or letter
- If there are punctuality concerns, parents/carers will be contacted and intervention will take place.

Unplanned Absence

The student's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before 8am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school. Parents/carers will be directed to the appropriate Head of Year to report absence. Absence can also be reported directly to our Attendance Officer, Mr Willcock.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Where the absence is longer than 3 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The Head of Year and/or the Attendance Officer, should be notified of any appointments or known absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, or contact 101 if there are known vulnerabilities
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the appropriate services, including the Local Authority Attendance Team manager, Debbie Parlane.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

Internal Truancy

Internal truancy is where students have been registered during a session (AM or PM) but fail to attend particular lessons without a valid reason. Subject teachers are required to complete a register at the start of every lesson. Where a student is absent but has previously been in during the day, the teacher must notify the school reception immediately so the students' absence can be investigated. All staff have the responsibility to report any suspicious absence and challenge students who are outside of class during lesson time. All truancy will be sanctioned appropriately and proportionately.

Students off site

When students have to leave the site for any reason, school should be provided with a letter signed and dated or receive a phone call from the parent/carer. The information should indicate the reason for leaving the school site, the time that the student should leave and information regarding their child's return. All students leaving the school site must sign out at the school office.

Lunchtime

All students must remain on-site at lunchtime at all times. Any students leaving the school site without permission will be sanctioned appropriately and proportionately.

Punctuality

It is important that students arrive promptly each day. The school day begins at 8.30am on a Monday through to Thursday, with students expected to arrive in their lines from 8.25am. On a Friday, the school day starts at 8.55am, with students expected to arrive in their lines from 8.50am. Students arriving after the bell will be recorded as late and those arriving after the register has closed, will be marked as absent using the appropriate code.

Students who arrive late must register their lateness with a member of staff upon entry, where an appropriate mark will be recorded on the register. Students who are late without an appropriate reason will be sanctioned on the same day. We ask for the parents support to ensure that this is not a regular occurrence.

Support systems

The school recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a student's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/ separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and children in care.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Form tutor intervention
- Pastoral team support and intervention
- Attendance Officer strategies for success
- Discussion with parents and students
- Attendance panels
- Referrals to support agencies
- Time limited reduced timetables
- Reintegration support packages
- Reward systems
- Liaison with the Local Authority
- Other strategies deemed appropriate to motivate and engage young people and families.

Local Authority support

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School and Warrington LA attendance team will consider the use of legal sanctions. The LA will consider prosecuting such families under the Education Act (1996). As a parent you are legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly and is punctual. If you fail to ensure this you are committing an offence under the Education Act (1996) which may lead to a fine of up to £2500 and/or a prison sentence.

Police

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the police now have powers to remove truants found in public places and to return them either to their schools or a place of safety designated by the LA.

Rewarding good attendance

The school also recognise the importance of celebrating good attendance and motivating the students to improve their attendance. A number of initiatives and rewards events will take place throughout the academic year and will include:

- Attendance raffles
- Attendance lottery
- 100% attendance certificates
- Most improved attendance rewards
- Secret student
- Celebration in the Boteler Bulletin
- Parent rewards
- Form competitions
- Attendance data supporting other rewards event decisions throughout the year.

Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence, with follow up contact on a daily basis for further absence.

Authorised absence – Parents have informed the school of the absence and the reason for it is seen as reasonable from the school's viewpoint.

Reasonable reasons are listed below:

Illness: In most cases a telephone call from the parent informing the school that their child is ill is acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/dental appointments: Parents are advised, where possible, to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day.

Other authorised circumstances: This relates to occasions where there is a cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances; for example, family bereavements, serious family crisis or emergency school closures etc.

Suspensions: Suspension from school is counted as an authorised absence. The student's class teacher and Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Family holidays and extended leave: This will only be granted for exceptional circumstances.

Religious observance: The school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. This necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Dual registration: Where a student is dually registered at two institutions; for example, a mainstream school and a Student Referral Unit (PRU), hospital school or special school. The student is registered as having an approved education activity while they are attending the other institution on a temporary basis.

Approved educational activity off site: This category can be used when a student is:

- Receiving education off site or other than at the school where registered
- Participating in an approved sporting activity
- At a work experience placement
- Educational visit or placement (including college-link courses)
- Attending an interview with prospective employers or for a place at another educational establishment.

Pregnancy: Where possible a student should attend school. Home tuition will be offered to students who are no longer medically able to attend school or after week 36 of the pregnancy. A period of home tuition will also be offered after the baby has been born until the student can return to school.

Unauthorised absence will be recorded unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. Your child's absence will not be authorised if they are absent:

- To look after the house or other members of the family
- To go shopping or visit relatives
- Persistent illness that is not covered by medical evidence
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school
- Because it's raining
- Because you/they got up late
- Because they missed the bus
- For family birthdays or to go on family outings.

Holidays

The Department for Education (DfE) announced important amendments to legislation surrounding holidays in term time. From 1 September 2013, **the new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.** Any applications for leave of absence must be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Parents can be fined via Warrington Borough Council's Attendance Service for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school and the absence would be 'unauthorised' on the student's record.

In the case of an unavoidable holiday in term time, parents must ask permission from the Headteacher in advance, explaining the circumstances behind the request. Parents should do this as soon as they are aware that their child may be at risk of missing school time.

Travellers

The aim for the attendance of traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school regularly and as frequently as possible.

To help ensure continuity of education for traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dually registered at that school and the main school. Children whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as the other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst travelling. This is to protect them unfairly losing their place at their school of attendance.

We can only effectively operate as the child's base school if we are engaged in on-going dialogue with traveller families. This means that parents must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School will authorise absence of traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return. Where traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student.

Deletions from the register

In accordance with the Education (student registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & 2013 Amendment, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The student ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfers between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- In custody for more than 4 months

- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the local authority has failed to locate the student

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School will follow Warrington Borough Council's missing education protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

Related school policies

This policy to be read in conjunction with these other school policies and guidance:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- E-Registration Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded (now known as suspension)	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day