



The following further amplifies our policy and procedures in relation to pupil absence as briefly referred to in the School's annually updated **Handbook for Parents, Health and Medical Care, Section (a) Procedures on Absence Through Illness/Accidents (page 21)**.

This policy briefly establishes the roles and responsibilities of parents and staff in ensuring that good attendance and timekeeping is achieved and maintained, on the simple premise that such attendance/timekeeping is the foundation of ensuring that the attainment and wider achievement of each individual pupil, and therefore of the wider School, is maximised and maintained.

Benchmark

100% attendance is the expected benchmark for all pupils but clearly that is rarely achievable for a range of justifiable reasons including ill-health, bereavement, medical appointments and family circumstance; nevertheless, this remains the benchmark.

The average School year for Belmont House pupils is 180 teaching days and we consider a 95% as being "good attendance", equating to approximately 9 days absence per year. An attendance below 95% means an individual child or young person is missing significant amounts of class contact/teaching time over the course of the year.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 sets out the rights and duties of parents in relation to their children's education, Section 30 of the Act placing a duty on the parent to provide efficient education suitable to age, ability and aptitude of the child either by causing them to attend (a public school) regularly or by other means. Equally, the School also has legal responsibilities to ensure attendance.

Attendance – the role of parents/guardians/carers

We would expect our parents to support the School in ensuring good attendance and timekeeping by:

- **Encouraging good habits** by making sure your child/young person attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- **Only keep your child/young person off when there is a valid reason.** Please be assured that the school will contact you if your child is unwell so that the child can be taken home.
- **If your child is absent, please contact the School on a DAILY basis** to update us on their absence.
- **Please ensure that contact details are up to date.** If your details change for any reason – moving house or new mobile number – please remember to contact the School and advise us of the change.
- **Always give your child/young person an absence note on their return**, even if you have already phoned the school.
- **Please avoid taking holidays during term time** if at all possible – we understand that there are occasionally justifiable reasons for such absences, but they can seriously disrupt academic progress so please discuss with the Head of Junior School or Senior Vice-Principal as appropriate



as this can seriously disrupt academic progress. However, if your child has to miss school for family reasons it is imperative that the school is informed in writing.

- **Authorised absence for special occasions should be requested in advance.** For example, please contact your child's Junior School Class Teacher or Senior School Tutor to arrange time off for weddings, dental or medical appointments etc.

Latecoming – the role of parents/guardians/carers

The importance of punctuality/arriving in good time for the start of the School day at 0900 is often undervalued. The reality is that a pupil arriving just 5 minutes late every day in one academic year would miss the equivalent of 15 hours of class time or over 2.5 teaching days.

Parents are asked to make every effort to ensure their child/young person arrives in School in good time for the start of each day – for the avoidance of doubt, all pupils are expected to be on site for registration by 0850 each morning not 0900, when lessons actually commence.

The School considers punctuality to be very important. Latecoming often upsets the child/young person, disrupts the School day and interrupts the work of other pupils. Junior School class teachers/Senior School Tutors will speak to individual pupils where there are concerns about timekeeping and may contact parents if lateness persists. If the pupil fails to improve punctuality the Head of Junior School or Senior Vice-Principal may invite parents to School to discuss and develop strategies to help improve timekeeping.

Recording attendance and related actions

- All pupils are expected to be in School by 0850 and present in their Junior School classrooms or Senior School Tutor rooms by 0855 at the latest.
- Registration takes place between 0850 and 0900 and absences are recorded via iSAMS by JS class teachers or Senior School Tutors.
- JS pupils arriving after 0900 are expected to report to their class teachers.
- Senior School pupils arriving after 0900 must report to the School Office to sign in.
- There is a follow-up check by office staff of reported absentees and/or latecomers.
- The parents of ALL absentees are phoned on a daily basis unless there has already been contact from parents notifying of absence. To be clear, parents will be contacted immediately by telephone in every case of unauthorised, unexplained or unexpected absence.
- If a pupil has several unauthorised/unexplained absences e.g., two or more separate absences in a week, a significant number of absences over a period of time or a developing pattern of absence such as the same day every week being missed, the School will contact parents to initiate discussion on the underlying reasons. This will involve a face-to-face meeting in School with parents and pupil and, if necessary, a home visit.
- In the Senior School, all staff must record attendance for each individual lesson throughout each day, check absentees against iSAMS and notify the School Office of any discrepancies.



Summary – Actions by the School in the event of persistent unauthorised absence

It is an extremely rare occurrence that any pupil of the School would be the subject of serious concern due to prolonged unauthorised absence.

In such scenarios the School will work closely with the parents and child/young person to work towards re-establishing a pattern of attendance at School as quickly as possible. However, it should be noted that the School would reserve the right to contact external agencies if non-attendance formed part of a wider concern for the pupil's wellbeing and reached a sufficient threshold for doing so (please refer to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

Ultimately persistent unauthorised non-attendance may lead to a parent/carer/guardian being asked to withdraw the pupil from the School. In such instances the School will notify the local authority in which the family are domiciled that the pupil no longer attends Belmont House School.

Specific duties in relation to attendance for Tier 4 (overseas) pupils

For the purposes of compliance with the relevant section of UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance – Document 2, Paragraphs 7.5(e) Changes to student circumstances table – and the School's duties as a Tier 4 Sponsor in relation to migrant tracking and monitoring, a **Contact Point** in our context is defined as being **one** School Day.

Therefore, the threshold of 10 consecutive missed contact points under Paragraph 7.5(e) would be reached after two weeks' absence from School.

Notwithstanding the reality that the School would have expected to have had daily telephone contact with any parent over such a period of absence as per the procedures detailed above – and such consecutive absences are rare for any pupil save in the context of significant ill-health – the School at this point will contact the parents/carers/guardians of a Tier 4 pupil and arrange for them to attend the School for a meeting and, if necessary, arrange a follow-up home visit. In the context of the Guidance, we would consider these next two steps as setting two further checkpoints.

Unsatisfactory response at these "checkpoints" will result in a tenth missed contact being reported via the SMS and clear communication from the School that sponsorship is likely to be withdrawn in the event that attendance does not improve.

Role of Staff:

Responsibilities of Registration staff, especially Junior School Class Teachers and Senior School Tutors

It is a key responsibility of Junior School class teachers and Senior School Tutors (Pastoral Care staff) to monitor the attendance and timekeeping of their pupils. This is achieved in a variety of ways:

1. Praise pupils for their good attendance and timekeeping.
2. Check/report on pupil attendance and complete Class/Tutor Group registers via iSAMS by 0905 each day.



3. Record/monitor/counsel latecomers.
4. Collect and check parental absence notes - link to Head of Junior School or Senior Vice-Principal as appropriate if specific concerns
5. Retain absence for reference
6. Notify School Office of pupil data changes you become aware of
7. Share pastoral concerns/issues with Head of Junior School or Senior Vice-Principal as appropriate
8. Contact parents where necessary

Responsibilities of All Teaching Staff

1. Encourage all pupils to attend School/classes on a regular basis.
2. Praise all pupils who attend School regularly.
3. Check on pupil attendance and record pupil attendance at each individual lesson, including double periods (Senior School)
4. Link with Head of Junior School, Senior School Principal Teachers, Tutors and/or Senior Vice-Principal where you feel there may be further concern in relation to pupils missing your classes and/or being persistently late.

M.D. Shanks
Principal
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