



## Governors' Policy Statement on School Attendance and Punctuality

Issue No	Author/ Owner	Date Written/Revised	Approved by Governors on	Comments
1		July 2012	July 2012	
2	MCS	September 2016		Updated Policy

### 1 Introduction

Backwell School is committed to providing high quality inclusive learning opportunities for all students. We believe that, if students are to achieve their full potential, a continuing high level of attendance is crucial. Any problems that impede full attendance must be identified and addressed as speedily as possible. Likewise, poor punctuality is unacceptable and can lead to missed work, disruption of other's learning and can encourage absenteeism. We aim for maximum attendance and punctuality for all our students, with absence and lateness only for unavoidable reasons.

### 2 Content

The school works closely with parents and uses the strong home-school links already established whenever there is a concern about attendance or punctuality. School staff also work closely with outside agencies to ensure that any attendance issues are dealt with in the most appropriate manner. Backwell School follows the Government's statutory guidance 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations -2006' and the DFE School Attendance advice -2014.

### 3 Procedures

The responsibilities of staff for the application of this policy are highlighted in Appendix 1.

The school's procedures for supporting students and parents/carers with attendance and punctuality can be seen in Appendix 2. This includes the sanctions that the school will employ, rewards given to celebrate good attendance and the expectations that the school has for parents and carers.

The school's four stage action plan for attendance concerns is highlighted in Appendix 3.

### 4 Monitoring

This policy will be publicised to staff in the Staff Handbook and made available for printing to all parents and students via the school website. Monitoring is carried out through Unit Meetings, attendance reviews, pastoral reviews and the report system.

### 5 Evaluation

This policy is reviewed regularly. The review will include governors, parents, staff and students. The effectiveness and impact of this policy will be shown through the extent to which students attend school and their punctuality and will be measured using the school's figures for attendance and punctuality.

## **Appendix 1**

### **School Responsibilities**

The Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) has the strategic responsibility for attendance and will ensure that a fair and robust system is in operation to monitor the support and challenge of the Academy procedures relating to attendance and report to Governors when required. The Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) also has responsibility for ensuring that strategies are in place for the monitoring of, and support for, the attendance of vulnerable students.

The Pastoral Leaders and their deputies have responsibility for monitoring the attendance of the students in their units and for ensuring that appropriate support mechanisms are in place for pupils to encourage and promote high levels of attendance.

Teaching Staff have a duty to take all registers, both at morning registration and in lessons, promptly and accurately and highlight any concerns to the relevant Unit team and we as a school will make sure that all staff receive training in this and understand their responsibilities.

Staff acting as tutors have responsibility for tracking the attendance and punctuality of their tutees and informing their Unit leadership of any concerns.

Any interventions which are carried out by the pastoral team will be recorded onto SIMS and letters sent home will be attached to the student record.

The Attendance Co-ordinator is responsible for all administrative functions pertaining to attendance and for first day phone calls and written communications with parents to follow up absences and will liaise with the relevant Unit Teams, Parent Support Advisor and Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) in the monitoring of attendance.

The Parent Support Advisor will liaise with the Attendance Co-ordinator, Unit teams and Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) to ensure that support is given to parents and carers when needed.

The Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) will liaise with the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure that support is given to parents to ensure that high levels of student attendance are maintained.

## Appendix 2

### School Procedures

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for good reason such as illness, emergencies or other unavoidable cases.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and / or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences can include:

- Parents condoning absence without permission.
- Truancy.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive late after the register has closed.
- Students not attending school after missing their morning transport and not making adequate attempts to get into school.
- Birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.
- Children acting as carers.

The school follows a four stage action plan for dealing with attendance concerns, as outlined in Appendix 3. A flow chart showing the process is attached as Appendix 4 and exemplar letters for each stage are attached as Appendix 5.

Students' attendance is monitored throughout the day by the Attendance Co-ordinator who may, on the first day of absence, contact the parents of any student whose absence gives cause for concern.

Where a pupil has been absent and the school has not been able to make contact to explain the absence within a 10 day period, the 'Missing Children' procedures will be actioned by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant agencies notified.

Where a pupil has been continuously absent for not less than 20 school days and the absence was not authorised and the school does not have grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause, and the school and the LA have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is, the school will remove the child from the school roll. Additional reasons why a student might be removed from the school roll are outlined in the relevant legislation including "The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006"

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/regulation/8/made>

The maintenance of the school's registers are also held in line with this legislation.

### Lateness

All students should be in school, in the correct room and ready to start for 8.50am. Students who arrive after 8.55am will be marked as 'L' (late) on the register. If a student arrives significantly late, after 9.30am, then they are marked as 'U' (late after the register has closed).

If a student consistently arrives late for school the following negative impacts on their education and progress can follow:-

- the loss of learning suffered by the student missing work can build up to a considerable amount over a school year
- the disruption to the learning of other students in the class caused by late arrival
- increase in unauthorised absence.

Where a student is persistently late for school, the school will take the following measures:

- More than three late marks ('L' or 'U') to morning school in a timetable cycle will lead to the student being issued a detention.

Where a student is persistently late for lessons the student may be detained to catch up the time as well as being placed on report to their tutor and the parent/carers will be notified. If there is no improvement the student will be placed on report to their Pastoral Leader and further sanctions may follow.

Removal of end of year credits will be a sanction available for use with Year 11 students who have attendance or punctuality concerns.

Students with high levels of attendance will be praised and rewarded formally through the issuing of attendance rewards which facilitate the entry into the prize draws as part of the school's rewards policy. In addition, students will be congratulated in other ways, such as via phone calls home from the tutor or Pastoral Leader where students have significantly improved a previously poor attendance record.

### **Role of Parents and Carers**

It is the legal responsibility of parents and carers to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Parents or carers who condone absence without good reason should recognise that this is an offence in law and may result in legal action.

Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time each day during the academic year. They can support their children by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times to provide sufficient sleep
- Encouraging them to have all of their uniform and school equipment ready the night before
- Ensuring that their children have set alarms at the necessary times and where appropriate give their children wake up calls which allow time for a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any concerns promptly to school and retaining open and honest communication with the school
- Where possible arranging routine medical appointments outside of school hours
- Being positive about education

Parents should contact the school attendance office before 10.00 am on the day of the absence giving the reason for the absence and expected length of absence. Students should give a note to their tutor on their return confirming the reason for absence.

Planned absences should be agreed in advance with the student's Head of House and supported by a written note.

Parents are also responsible for alerting the Attendance Co-ordinator about the expected length of absence when phoning in to report an absence and follow this up with a letter or email, giving the reason for absence, on the day when the pupil returns to school.

Parents must ensure that the school has an up-to-date list of telephone numbers, including adults who can be contacted during the school day in case of emergencies. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that changes are notified to the school.

Where there is a need to remove students during the day for legitimate reasons these need to be agreed in advance with the student's Head of Unit and a written note should be presented to the student's tutor on the day of the absence and shown to reception when signing out.

There is no parental right to take a child out of school for holidays during term time. Absence for holidays during term time will only be authorised by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances as laid down in the relevant legislation. If the Headteacher does not authorise the absence, and the holiday goes ahead, the absence is recorded as unauthorised. The school reserves the right to start penalty notice proceedings if there is repeated taking of holiday during term time or if students with low attendance levels are taken out of school for an unauthorised holiday.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **School's Levels of Action for Poor Attendance**

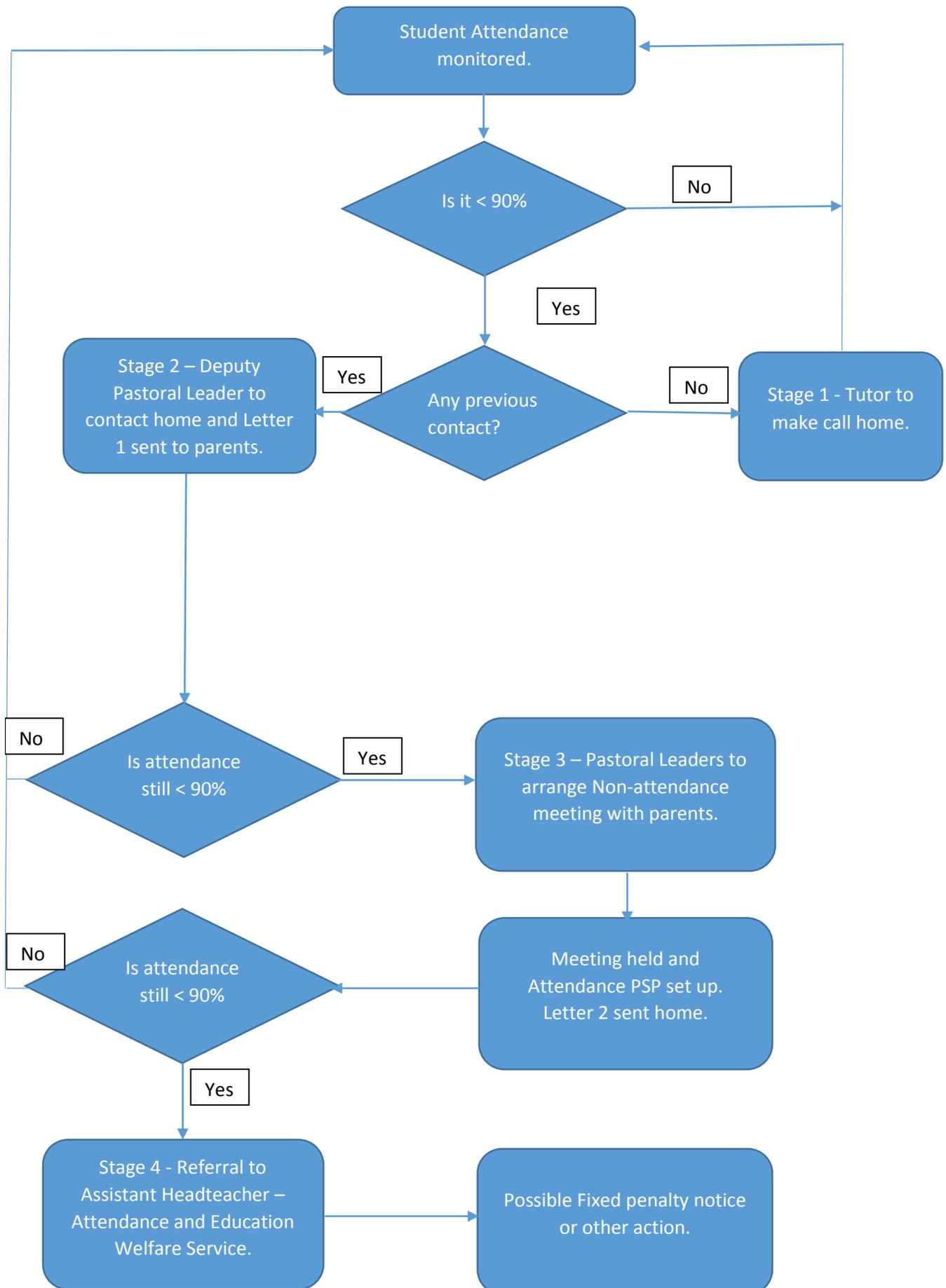
The levels highlight the range of support being offered to a student and their family. The students' attendance levels are monitored regularly by the Attendance Co-ordinator and Deputy Head of Unit and will be reviewed every six weeks. If there is no improvement during the six week period then the student will move up a level of intervention. If there is improvement over a six week period the student would move down a level.

Where there is a known long-term medical condition a student would be placed on Level 3 and remain there for the relevant period.

## Levels and possible school actions

<b>Stage 1 – Tutor lead</b>		
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Possible interventions and strategies</b>
<b>Pupil identified as attendance concern. These are all sub 90% and any others with sudden drop.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutor speaks to student and monitors situation.</li> <li>Supportive tutor phone call home to discuss attendance issue particularly where broken weeks are involved.</li> <li>Letter 1 sent if required. e.g. Phone calls not returned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If subject specific issue raised, tutor to pass on to relevant teacher and Curriculum Leader/ Subject Leader</li> <li>If specific wider school issue raised, tutor to pass on to Deputy Pastoral Leader.</li> <li>Attendance report card</li> <li>Offer work to be sent home.</li> <li>Phone call logged on SIMs and on PDR sheet.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2 – Deputy Pastoral Leader lead</b>		
<b>No improvement from Stage 1 after 6 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPL to see student again and contact home.</li> <li>Standard letter sent home in follow up to phonecall and placed on file.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If subject specific issue raised, tutor to pass on to relevant teacher and Curriculum Leader/ Subject Leader.</li> <li>If specific wider school issue raised, tutor to pass on to Pastoral Leader</li> <li>Discuss possible referral to Parent Support Adviser.</li> <li>Letter attached to SIMs record and logged as an intervention.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3 – Pastoral Leader lead</b>		
<b>No improvement from Stage 2 after 6 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoral Leader invites parents to a Non Attendance meeting (Attendance Clinic) due to persistent absentee concerns.</li> <li>Standard letter (2) sent home following meeting.</li> <li>Request for medical evidence before authorising absence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance PSP set up. This could include short term part time timetable (agreed with SLT link) or curriculum change (agreed with Curriculum Deputy)</li> <li>Referral to Parent Support Adviser</li> <li>PL/DPL to complete CAMHS referral, where relevant, and pass to Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion for signing and sending</li> <li>Letter and PSP attached to SIMs and logged.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4 – Assistant Headteacher lead – Pre Fixed Penalty Notice.</b>		
<b>No improvement from Stage 3 after 6 weeks.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If no improvement from Attendance PSP or parents fail to attend the Non-Attendance meeting without good reason refer to Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion</li> <li>Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion to refer to Education Welfare Officer for further action including possible fixed penalty notice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent Curriculum alteration – agreed with Curriculum Deputy</li> <li>Phased return to school facilitated by Assistant Headteacher- Inclusion.</li> <li>PL/DPL kept informed as student remains the responsibility of the Pastoral Leader.</li> <li>Education Welfare Officer home visit.</li> <li>Fixed penalty notice as agreed with Education Welfare Officer.</li> <li>Interventions all logged on SIMs</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4 - Attendance Flow Chart



## **Appendix 5 – Letters**

### Attendance : Stage 1

<Parental addressee>

<AddressBlock>

Dear <Parental Salutation>

**<Legal Forename> <Legal Surname> <Reg>**

I am writing to you following a recent review of our attendance records which shows that <Forename>'s attendance is currently below 90%.

The Department for Education states that any child with attendance below 90% is a 'persistent absentee' from school. At Backwell we aim for all students to achieve above 95% attendance over the academic year.

We will continue to monitor <Forename>'s attendance but if there are any ongoing medical conditions or problems that you would like to discuss with us which are preventing <Forename>'s from achieving 95% attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.

Yours sincerely

Tutor

\* \* \*

### Attendance : Stage 2

<Parental addressee>

<AddressBlock>

Dear <Parental Salutation>

**<Legal Forename> <Legal Surname> <Reg>**

I am writing to highlight the importance of attendance to school with regard to a student's progress. The Department for Education states that any child with attendance below 90% is a 'persistent absentee' from school.

We contacted you previously to highlight that <Forename>'s attendance was below 90% and our most recent review of attendance shows that this figure is currently only ....% since the start of this school year. Whilst we accept that illnesses occur and that if a child is ill they should not be in school, ....% equates to significantly more than one day of absence every fortnight.

We have set an individual target of 95% for all students and would hope that this can be achieved this year. If there is anything that we can do to help <Forename> reach this target, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Pastoral Leader