



Attendance Policy

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| Person responsible | DSL |
| Last update | September 2023 |
| Frequency of Review | Annual |
| Date of last review by Governors | November 2023 |
| Date of next review by Governors | November 2024 |

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all children, including those in EYFS.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. For pupils to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided at Bute House, they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years.

The safety and welfare of its children is the prime responsibility of the school and all at Bute House Preparatory School should do their utmost to ensure this. Making sure that all children are present, accounted for and safe is therefore a vital role of the staff at the school. **A child going missing from school or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or in itself may indicate that a pupil is at risk of significant harm.**

The legal framework governing school attendance is summarised in [Working together to improve school attendance \(DfE, May 2022\)](#). The school also complies with guidance issued by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and advice published by the Hammersmith and Fulham [ACE Team](#).

2. Responsibilities of Parents

- To make sure their children come to and are delivered to the school safely.
- Encourage regular and punctual attendance, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives punctually, prepared for learning.
- Provide clear reasons for any absence which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the school day.
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter.

3. Responsibilities of the School

The school has a legal responsibility for taking and maintaining an accurate attendance register of all pupils twice a day throughout each term of the academic year. The school has an additional Attendance Register that is kept electronically as a back-up copy, not less than once a month. Additional copies of the Attendance Registers are retained for three years after the end of that current school year. The Deputy Head has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance.

4. Procedures to Ensure All Pupils are Present and Attendance Registers

An Attendance Register is completed electronically every morning (by 8.35am) using SIMS, in line with the standard set of codes provided by the DfE. Afternoon registration takes place at 1pm (LS), 1.30pm (MS) and 2pm (US).

Teachers must register pupils as present or absent. Only children who are actually in the classroom at the time of registration should be marked as present, even if the teacher has already seen the pupil in school earlier in the morning. If a pupil is absent, the teacher must identify the code to be entered into the register. If a teacher is unaware of the reason for absence at the time of registration, they are to enter code 'N'. This will be followed up by the School Admin Team. The codes used are as follows:

| <u>Code</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Code</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| B | Educated off-site | O | Unauthorised circumstances |
| C | Other authorised circumstances | P | Approved sporting activity |
| E | Excluded | R | Religious observance |
| H | Annual family holiday (agreed) | S | Study leave |
| L | Late | T | Traveller absence |
| M | Medical / dental | V | Educational visit |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | X | Non-compulsory school age absence |

5. Procedures for Lateness

Any pupil arriving after morning registration at 8.35am will be marked late. Lateness will be tracked by Phase Leaders, on a half termly basis, and parents will be contacted by the Deputy Head, if persistent lateness occurs, or a pattern of lateness develops. The Head will write to parents if no improvement is seen. Staff record concerns about persistent lateness on the CPOMS system. Patterns can therefore be easily identified and followed up with the parents.

If a child arrives after 9.30am without reason, it will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

6. Procedures for Following Up Absence

If a child is not present for morning registration and no reason is known, the School Admin Team will attempt to contact the parents or guardians of the child to find out the reason for the absence. This will be initially by telephone, followed up by an email, if there is no response. These actions will be completed as a matter of urgency, and certainly by 9.30am each morning.

7. Acceptable Reasons for Absence

We recognise that there are circumstances where a pupil's absence cannot be avoided. These may include:

- Illness: when your child is unwell, either physically or mentally, and unable to attend school
- Medical appointments: if your child has a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, please notify us in advance and provide relevant documentation
- Religious observance: we respect the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our pupils. If your pupil needs to be absent for religious observance, please submit a request and the Head will review and approve the absence
- Exceptional circumstances: in exceptional circumstances, such as family emergencies or unforeseen events, please contact the school immediately to discuss the absence

Parents wishing to take their child out of school for other reasons must seek authorisation for the absence from the Head by sending an email to mail@butehouse.co.uk. The Head will either authorise the requested absence or inform the parent that their request will be recorded as an “Unauthorised Absence”, depending on the reason given.

Parents are requested to make any family holiday arrangements during the school holidays as it is to a child’s disadvantage to miss any time off-school.

8. Persistent Absence

Child absences are monitored by the School Admin Team, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Pastoral Leadership Team. On a fortnightly basis, the School Admin Team run reports for attendance, which are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Pastoral Leadership Team will monitor attendance records in each phase as follows:

- Pupils with an attendance record between 90 and 95% will be monitored and tracked by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Any pupil with an attendance record lower than 90% requires an investigation and this may result in a letter to parents from the Deputy Head and the Head will be informed.
- Once the parents have been contacted, the issue will be discussed. If appropriate, the issue would be discussed with the child too.
- The Head will become involved if repeated absences are noted on three, or more occasions.
- The School is aware of its responsibility to inform the local authority (Hammersmith and Fulham) of any child who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the School’s permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

9. Procedures for Handing Over Children at the End of the School Day

In all year groups, the children are handed over directly to the parent or carer, at the end of the school day. Once the child is handed over, they are the responsibility of the parent/carer. Staff will not hand a child over or let them go unless a known adult is collecting. Children are always fully supervised until they are collected. A member of staff is on the main door to ensure no child goes astray.

Some Year 6 pupils will travel home unaccompanied, these children are only released by members of staff, if such arrangements for specific days have been confirmed by parents on the After-School Collection Arrangements Form.

For all pupils in the school, including EYFS, children can only be collected by another adult if we have received authorisation within the After-School Collection Arrangements Form, completed by the parents of each child at the beginning of the academic year. This authorisation is in relation to specific adults, on specific days. Release of children to such individuals can only be done in-line with the agreed and authorised days.

10. Procedures for an Uncollected Child

If a child is not collected at the end of the school day, the child will be handed over to the duty member of SLT and they will look after the child and make efforts to contact one of the parents or carers. No child may be left unsupervised.

If a child is not collected, staff will call the primary contact, followed by the secondary contact, before calling the 'Emergency contact' (usually a friend, neighbour or relative) that has been nominated by the parents, and arrange for the child to be collected. If contact cannot be made with the child's parents/carer or the emergency contact by 6pm, the School will contact Hammersmith & Fulham Family Services. The child will remain, fully supervised, in the care of staff until collected.

11. Record Keeping

All records created in accordance with the policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records. These records may contain personal data; the School's use of which will be in accordance with data protection law. Please cross reference this with the School's GDPR Statement of Intent.