



Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction and Aims

This policy aims to provide a clear, consistent and cohesive framework which conforms with statutory requirements and promotes high levels of attendance and punctuality of pupils at the school. It is applied fairly and consistently considering the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

All pupils, 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 the School, 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 pupils 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 \(DfE, August 2024\)](#) . The school also complies with guidance issued by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and advice published by the Hammersmith and Fulham [ACE Team](#).

2. Scope and Responsibilities

This policy is applied to the whole School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

It is the responsibility of the 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 good attendance when a child is fit, healthy and able to attend school.
- 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.

As recommended within Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, August 2024), the School has designated the Deputy Head as the 'Senior Attendance Champion'. The responsibilities of this role include:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

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, and is updated 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.

3. 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 (Lower School), 1.30pm (Middle School) and 2pm (Upper School).

Teachers must register pupils as present or absent. Only pupils 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:

Present Codes	
/ \	Present during registration
B	Educated off site and taster days (and do not fit 'K, V, P or W' codes)
K	Attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	Arrived after the register has been taken but before it has closed

P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work Experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	Exceptional circumstances
C1	In a regulated performance
C2	Absent due to part-time timetable
D	Dual registered
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	Absent due to visiting another school for potential future admission
M	Medical or dental appointment
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observation (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as 'C' if agreed)
S	Study leave
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to other unavoidable cause
Unauthorised Absences	

G	Holiday (not agreed)
N	Reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Late after register has closed (9.30am)

4. 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 pupil arrives after 9.30am without reason, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

5. Procedures for Following Up Absence

If a pupil 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.

6. 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.

7. Persistent Absence

Pupil 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, a meeting between the parents and Deputy Head will be arranged to discuss the issue. 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).

8. 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 pupil over or let them go unless a known adult is collecting. Pupils are always fully supervised until they are collected. A member of staff is on the main door to ensure no pupil 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.

9. 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/carers 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.

10. 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.

11. Monitoring and Review

The Deputy Head will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Policy.

The Attendance Policy will be subject to review at least annually (or more frequently if changes to legislation, regulation or statutory guidance so require) by the Deputy Head and the Governing Body.

The date of the next review is shown on the front page.

Appendix 1: Quick Reference Contact Details for Parents

Reason for Communication	Person(s) to Contact	Contact Details
Informing the School about a pupil's absence on the day of absence	School Office and relevant class teacher	Call 020 7603 7381 or email mail@butehouse.co.uk and relevant class teacher
Requesting leave of absence	Head	mail@butehouse.co.uk
To discuss wider attendance issues	Deputy Head (Senior Attendance Champion)	gpuckle@butehouse.co.uk