

# **BOURNE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**“Achievement Through Partnership”**

**Specialist MFL/English College**



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**September 2010**



## **The Philosophy of the College**

The paramount aim of the College is to give all students the widest possible opportunity to develop to the full in academic, social and personal terms, so that they may mature into responsible, thoughtful and caring adults, able to take their place in the community with confidence.

**The following principles will underpin our work and help us to achieve our aims:-**

- To offer a stable, secure and happy environment within which each student is known and valued as an individual and can, as a result, both relate to others and have a genuine concern for them.
- The pursuit of excellence at all levels is at the heart of the College ethos, as is the awareness of spiritual and moral values.
- To encourage students (in a structured and purposeful ambience), to develop enquiring minds, take responsibility for their own learning and to see the value of perseverance.
- We believe that positive incentives help to motivate students to achieve their potential; our approach to teaching and our system of assessment and reporting to parents reflect this belief by laying stress on achievement and by recognising success in all aspects of the life and interests of each student.
- A high standard of conduct is considered to be of the greatest importance and students are expected to show consideration and courtesy, and to have respect both for the property of other people and for the immediate and wider environment.
- Controlled, sensible behaviour is required at all times. A College Code of Conduct exists in order that students may develop an understanding of their responsibilities towards themselves and towards others.
- Punctuality, a neat and tidy appearance in correct uniform and the use of moderate and acceptable language are seen as important elements in the self-presentation of students.
- The College looks for the support of parents in helping to maintain the highest possible standards in these and in all other aspects of its life. Each student has a Home-College agreement in their Student Planner, which is signed by Student, College and Parents to encourage support.

## **College Attendance Policy**

### **1 Rationale**

The College places a high value on regular and punctual attendance, the benefit it brings and how it is an expression of the College's vigilance, care and concern for its students' well being.

Although it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their youngsters attend College, Boume Community College will seek to support and maximise the attendance of its students.

The Policy links with and reflects the overall ethos of the College community and outlines the way the College will promote attendance and respond to poor attendance. The Policy is based on current legislation and guidance and takes into account the evidence required for inspections.

### **2 Encouraging Attendance**

By promoting a positive environment where students feel safe, known, respected and recognised, they will see the College as a positive experience.

This can be achieved by:-

- Students and staff following our Behaviour for Learning Policy which emphasises mutual respect and individual rights
- Students being known as named individuals and an interest shown in their lives both in and out of College
- Praising and reinforcing good behaviour, effort and achievement. Giving constructive feedback
- Viewing students as stakeholders in the College and their learning, involving them in the decision-making process or at the very least explaining why decisions are made on their behalf
- Providing a physical environment that is well kept, attractive, stimulating and safe
- A relevant and interesting curriculum
- Interesting lessons
- Autonomous, independent learning
- Gearing curriculum, teaching and resources to individuals' needs
- Providing appropriate support with personal, social and academic skills for individuals in need
- Helping students to re-integrate in terms of relationships and catching up with work following a long-term absence
- Ensuring parents, students, staff and the wider community understand the importance of regular attendance at College.

### **3 Staff Responsibilities for Marking Registers and Monitoring Attendance**

- Form tutors have daily contact with their students in tutor groups when the register of attendance is taken using SIMS Attendance
- The register is a legal document and is marked in accordance with guidelines from West Sussex County Council. (Appendix A.)
- Form tutors are alert to the development of erratic or poor attendance patterns in their registers
- Where concerns about attendance exist Form Tutors should raise these issues with their Student Manager
- Student Managers meet fortnightly with the Education Welfare Officer from West Sussex where patterns of attendance are discussed. Where individual attendance is presenting a concern, appropriate action will be decided.
- The College and Education Welfare Officer keep a number of students under review. Records are kept on these students using BATS.
- Subject staff must keep a register for every lesson using lesson monitor and follow up punctuality issues. Absence concerns should be reported to the Form Tutor.

### **4 How Authorised and Unauthorised is Categorised**

- The register shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity, or absent
- If a student is absent the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised –
  - a) Authorised absence is where the College has either given approval in advance for a student to be away, or has accepted an explanation afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.
  - b) All other absences must be treated as unauthorised.
- Parents may not authorise absence, only the College can do this.
- The College uses codes to differentiate between different types of authorised absences in accordance with West Sussex County Council guidance. (Appendix A)
- If a student comes into College after 8.45 am and 1.45 pm when the registration period has closed then he/she is marked as unauthorised absent unless a note, e-mail or telephone message from parents is provided.

### **5 The College's Procedures when Absences Occur**

- Students leaving the College must report to the receptionist and sign out in the book provided. They must also sign in on return. Students must not leave the College site without prior permission

from the form tutor. An appointment card or letter should be presented by the student before leaving the site

- If it is discovered that a student has left the College site without permission, the Student Manager should be immediately advised. Parents should be informed, as soon as possible, that we are not certain of their son/daughter's whereabouts and therefore not in control of their safety.
- A parent should always inform the College of planned absences for hospital, optician, dental and doctor's appointments prior to the appointment, or on the day of return after an absence.
- The normal procedure for an un-notified absence is:-
  - a) If nothing is heard after seven days to explain an absence the Student Manager should write to the parents/carers, asking for an explanation for the absence.
  - b) If no explanation for the absence is received after a further week, a follow-up letter is sent stating that if reasons for the absence are not received, the absence will be classed as unauthorised.
  - c) The Education Welfare Officer will be informed of unauthorised absences.
  - d) Students who are known to truant will be referred to the Education Welfare Office and the situation will be reviewed until the matter is resolved.
  - e) Parents/carers will be notified that the Education Welfare Service will be involved.

## **6 Staff Training on Attendance Issues**

Staff receive regular training and staff development on attendance issues through:

- Whole College in-service training
- Tutor Team Meetings
- County and regional courses for individual teachers which are subsequently shared with other staff
- College circulars
- Education Welfare Service
- Government advice/circulars
- Research documents.

## **7 Parents' Legal Responsibilities Regarding Attendance and Punctuality**

Parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their youngsters attend College regularly and punctually until the single school leaving date at the end of June in Year 11.

## 8 Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

It is very important that students should not have holidays during the College academic year as this results in gaps in learning and affects academic results.

The College will not authorise any holidays taken during the academic year unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If a family holiday is unavoidable the following procedures should be followed:-

- Requests for holidays should be made at least two weeks in advance to withdraw a youngster from the College.
- Forms are obtainable from the College receptionist
- The parent should complete the form and return it for consideration by the Assistant Headteacher, Student Support. Note: it is for the College to authorise absence. Parents do not have the automatic right to take a child out of College for the purpose of a holiday. Clarification on authorizing leave of absence can be obtained from the DfEE document entitled "Social Inclusion: Pupil Support" (Circular 10/99).
- The Assistant Headteacher will return the form to the parent, indicating whether the holiday has been authorised or not
- If a holiday is authorised the appropriate code should be inserted on the absence register.

**Note: Unless special circumstances exist, odd days cannot be regarded as a genuine family holiday.**

## 9 Procedures for Parents when Absence Occurs

When a student is absent parents should contact the College on the first day of absence using one of the methods listed below:-

- Telephone the College
- Use e-mail
- Pass a note or message via a friend or relative
- Send a note in with a sibling.

The College Administrative Staff will ensure the Form Tutor receives the e-mail and there is a dedicated extension line for all messages concerning absence/attendance which is monitored on a daily basis during term times.

A note or letter outlining the reason for the absence and the date(s) of absence should be written by the parent and sent into College with the student on the day of his/her return. This can also be done by e-mail or a telephone message.

When a student has a dental, hospital or other medical appointments parents should ensure that a note or appointment card is brought into College and shown to the tutor on the day prior to the appointment. If the student comes into College after the start of the College day having had a medical appointment then parents should ensure he/she brings in a note or appointment card explaining the absence.

## 10 **First Day Contact Arrangements**

In order to minimize unauthorised absence the College runs a first day contact scheme.

- Students are placed on this scheme by the Director of Learning when truancy is uncovered or as a joint strategy to improve attendance in consultation with the Education Welfare Officer
- The scheme is aimed at targeting those students whose attendance it is felt can be improved by this managed intervention
- The list of students on the first day contact register will be reviewed half termly by Student Managers in consultation with the Education Welfare Officer and student's names should be removed when attendance has improved
- Where the scheme has completed its period and attendance has not improved the Education Welfare Officer will write to the parents and take these cases forward for further intervention.

## 11 **Setting Work for Absent Students**

- Work should only be set for students who are absent for more than two weeks and where professional guidance eg Doctor (GP), Consultant, Psychiatrist, Education Welfare Officer informs the College the child is unable to attend
- Work should be set until the child returns to College or the Local Education Authority provides Home Tuition. This will need to be reviewed on an individual basis where non-attendance continues over a four-week period from the commencement of setting work
- When staff are discussing the setting of work with parents an agreed period of "most likely" absence should be identified. When requesting work from subject staff the "most likely" period of absence should be indicated. Subject teachers should set one piece of extended work per subject appropriate to the period of absence. The student on their return should present this to the subject teacher for marking.

## 12 **Arrangements for a Student's Return after Long-term Absence**

Where students have had prolonged absence from College support will be given to the student to enable him/her to have a smooth return. The appropriate Student Manager will hold a support meeting with the student and parents to identify an action plan of agreed strategies, which are appropriate to the needs of the students.

### 13 **Rewarding Good Attendance**

The College celebrates the importance of encouraging and recognising good attendance through its award system. It does this by:-

- Celebrating high levels of attendance at Awards ceremonies
- Giving certificates to high and improving attenders
- Praise to individual students
- Letters of praise sent home
- Attendance figures published on student annual progress reports

The College is also involved in local attendance initiatives which raise awareness of the importance of good attendance.

### 14 **Procedures for Referral to Outside Agencies**

Where attendance difficulties require the advice and support of outside agencies such as Child and Family Mental Health Service, Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Service, etc, the appropriate member of College staff will liaise with parents in order to support students' needs.

Contacting different agencies requires different referral routes and parents will be advised of these.

### 15 **Emergency Procedures**

- The College Receptionist will print registers at 9.00 am and 2.00 pm and take registers to the College Assembly Point
- Form Tutors should check the register against students present
- Registers should be returned to the College Receptionist and report any issues.

### 16 **Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy**

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed and evaluated in the following ways:-

- At staff meetings, governors' meetings, College Council meetings, Parent's Consultation meetings and with outside agencies
- Analysis of attendance levels and procedures
- Targets and success criteria examined
- Monitoring of consistency and effectiveness of procedures and practice
- Comparison of data with national, County and local scene.

The Policy will be reviewed annually during each Autumn Term.

# REVIEW CYCLE

<b>FIRST REVIEW</b>	<b>SECOND REVIEW</b>	<b>THIRD REVIEW (FULL)</b>
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