

Brine Leas School

An Academy

BL6 ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Sixth Form students should aim to have 100% attendance in order to maximise their educational experiences and attainment.

The basic requirements of all Sixth Form students are to attend:-

- timetabled lessons
- registrations as per timetable
- enrichment sessions
- examinations and assessments
- tutorials
- 1:1 meetings
- any other organised event within normal school hours

Where students are eligible for the 16-19 Bursary and/or BL6 Travel Bursary, if the student has failed to attend 95% of their lessons in a given time frame, they will receive no payment for that period, and the sixth form administration team will notify the 16-19 Bursary Application Panel to that effect. However, we accept that some absences are unavoidable and in some circumstances the Sixth Form will deem absence to be authorised, and in these instances will not affect 16-19 Bursary payments.

Absences will be considered to be unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. In other words, where there is an absence and the student wishes this to be authorised, it is up to the student to notify and agree this with the Sixth Form in line with this policy. If the absence can be foreseen, then the student must apply for authorised absence in advance by completing a Sixth Form Request for Absence Form and forwarding these to the appropriate subject staff and the Sixth Form administrator. This must be done at least two days before any planned absence. It is not acceptable to miss classes without prior notification and then to ask that the absence should be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests for planned absence of more than one day must be submitted in writing by the student or parent to the relevant Progress Manager of the Sixth Form. If this is approved, an Excusal Form should then be completed and submitted as detailed in the above paragraph.

Where the reason for absence could not reasonably have been foreseen, the Sixth Form will consider whether the absence should be authorised. In such instances, the Sixth Form administration team should be informed by telephone (01270 621612) by 9:30am on the day of absence by the student or parent/guardian. If absence is due to illness, details of the nature of the complaint and an estimate of the time they will be absent should be given.

When a student reports their own absence, upon their return to Sixth Form the student should then complete a Student Self Certification Form and have this countersigned by a parent/guardian¹ before returning it to the Sixth Form Administrator. This must be done within 48 hours of return. It is the student's responsibility to complete all work missed during their absence prior to their next lesson when possible.

2. ABSENCES WHICH CAN BE FORESEEN

Absences will be authorised if the reason(s) given is valid. Reasons which would usually be considered to be acceptable include, but not limited to:-

- A medical appointment which cannot be arranged outside Sixth Form hours
- To look after a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities. However, this does not cover babysitting younger siblings
- A religious holiday in line with the student's faith
- A visit to a University either to attend an open day (maximum of 5 days to be approved in a year) or for interview
- A career related interview (that cannot be scheduled away from timetabled lessons)
- An appointment with a Careers Advisor (although these should normally be scheduled to avoid disruption to studies)
- A work experience placement which is an integral part of a course, cannot be arranged during the enrichment slot and for which the student does not receive a wage
- Participating in a significant extra-curricular activity, such as drama, music, sport or volunteering. Authorised absence will be granted only where the activity reflects a significant level of personal achievement, for example, taking part in a regional or national event, or for some other one-off event such as Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. Authorised absences for this reason will be granted on an individual basis; where a pattern of frequent participation in such activities is proposed, solutions will be explored personally with the student.
- Attendance at the funeral of a close friend or immediate family
- Severe disruption to a student's mode of transport where there is no practical way of getting to Sixth Form
- A driving test
- Court attendance
- Family bereavement
- Wedding of an immediate family member
- Visits approved by the Sixth Form
- Department study days
- Study leave for a subject once the examinations for that subject have been taken.

These are general guidelines, and we will take account of: the inherent reasonableness of any case; the number of absences taken by any one individual; and repetitions of the same reason. In all cases Request for Absence Forms must be completed by the students, countersigned by a parent/guardian¹ and submitted to subject staff and the sixth form administrator (or the Assistant Director(s) of Sixth Form if more than one day of absence is requested).

¹ This may not be applied to students living on their own.

The following reasons for absence would not be acceptable:-

- Holiday taken during term-time
- Social events during term-time
- Part or full time work which is not part of the student's programme of study
- Student union or political activities
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Shopping
- Driving lessons and the driving theory test
- Late arrival to lessons/tutorials
- Routine medical/dental appointments.
- Missing lessons to complete coursework / homework.
- Taking unofficial exam study leave

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but is to give an indication of the types of absence that are not acceptable.

3. ABSENCES WHICH CANNOT BE FORESEEN IN ADVANCE

Where an absence genuinely could not be foreseen in advance, the student or parent should inform the Sixth Form as soon as possible on the day in question that they will be missing classes in line with the advice given earlier in this policy. The only exception to the above is where the student has a strong reason why they failed to contact the Sixth Form. This might be because an event has been particularly disturbing or unpleasant, or because of a genuine practical barrier. Any such reasons must be notified to the Personal Tutor or Sixth Form Assistant Director(s) as soon as possible.

The following are examples of reasons for absence which would tend to be acceptable, provided that the Sixth Form has been notified on the day:-

- An emergency involving a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities. Sudden severe illness would be an example. However, while such cases will be treated sympathetically on a one-off-basis, they will not be acceptable as regular grounds for authorizing absence.
- Family bereavement.
- Transport problems, where these were **not** known about in advance, and where there is no alternative means to hand.

4. ABSENCE DUE TO SICKNESS

Up to a maximum of 10 days self-certificated absence per year may be authorised through Student Self Certification Forms. However, the Sixth Form is entitled to turn down applications for authorised sickness absence for 16-19 Bursary payments if they have reason to doubt their validity. Any emerging pattern of non-attendance due to sickness without explanation would be unacceptable. Where students are absent for a period of more than 5 days a medical certificate will be required for Bursary payments to be authorised. Extended sickness absence will lead to the renegotiation of the Bursary and the possibility of the withdrawal of Bursary payments as these are dependent on attendance at the Sixth Form.

5. ATTENDANCE AT LESSONS AND REGISTRATION

Attendance at morning registration is compulsory. This is a valuable time spent with tutors preparing you for life within and beyond sixth form through Independent Advice and Guidance. Tutors are responsible for registering students to these sessions and for writing student references; therefore, it is in the best interests of the student to attend all morning registrations.

6. LESSON REGISTRATION

Teachers record students' attendance to lessons via their online registration system. Students must endeavour to arrive on time to their lessons, however, if a student arrives late it is their responsibility to ensure the teacher updates their register with a 'L' to signify that they were late.

The Sixth Form endeavours to cover teachers' absence with specialist teachers. However, if this is not possible, it is the students responsibility to keep their attendance accurate by signing the class register displayed outside the BL6 Administration Office at the start of the lesson. Failure to get a mark registered by either the teacher or the BL6 Administration team will count as an unauthorised absence in that lesson. Students must ensure they have registered to all lessons, even in the occurrence of teacher absence.

7. LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE

The Sixth Form will regard students reaching attendance of over 95% as having very good attendance and will report it as such in any reference given. Students with attendance levels of less than 95% may expect to be subject to intervention strategies from their Progress Tutor, Student Progress Co-Ordinators or the Sixth Form Leadership. These may include a mixture of support and sanction and will usually involve parental contact, including meetings. We reserve the right to not support the exam entries of students whose attendance is persistently below 85% as this severely affects performance. Such students may be withdrawn from some or all of their examinations and their place at BL6 may be withdrawn if unacceptable attendance continues.

8. STUDY PERIODS

The transition from Year 11 to Year 12 needs to be a managed process as students get used to the demands of A-Level and other Level 3 courses, study time and the overall workload associated with Post-16 studies.

As such, from the start of Year 12 until February half-term in Year 12, all students should use their study period effectively and remain on site. Feedback will be given by Progress Tutors and other staff as to the overall level of performance, any concerns that have been raised and how students are managing their study time.

From February half-term in Year 12, students who have made a successful transition and are complying with all of the requirements placed upon them will be encouraged to independently manage their study time. At least 4 of these periods should be spent in one of the study areas (library, study spaces, ICT suites, etc.).

Evidence in preparing students for Advanced examinations tells us that successful students spend at least 4 hours per fortnight studying outside the classroom, for each subject they are taking. For all subjects there will be assignments to complete, notes to read over and clarify, background reading and revision for internal and external examinations. To succeed students should spend most of their study periods in BL6 and two to three hours each evening studying. A part-time job, less than 12 hours, can be really beneficial in terms of gaining life experience and balancing commitments as well as earning money. However, students should be wary of over-committing to a part-time job, as post-16 courses require considerable additional study time.

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