

## **Buile Hill Visual Arts College**

**Draft**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY 2013-14**

Buile Hill Visual Arts College is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavor to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will work consistently towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DFE.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and regional attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Our Policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

#### **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or a designated member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise the absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

#### **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.25am. In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment or other previously known reason, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. With effect from September 2013, the register will close at 9am sharp, meaning that any pupils arriving after this time will be marked absent for the whole morning. The absence will be deemed unauthorised. As per the current school policy, 10 unauthorised absences will

result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice – this will include unauthorised absences due to late arrival after 9am.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting with the relevant staff will be arranged to discuss what support can be offered.

The afternoon registration is at 12:00 p.m.

### **First Day Absence**

Parent/carers are expected to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the first day of absence and on each day of absence thereafter. Reasons for the absence should be given along with an anticipated date for return during the initial call. Upon the pupil's return the parent/carer must provide written confirmation of the reason for their absence.

The school operates a "First Day Response System." Parents/carers will be contacted but if this fails then a house visit may take place.

### **Second Day Absence**

If there has been no communication as to why a student is absent, the Attendance Coordinator will visit the family home.

A "calling card" will be left requesting immediate contact if there is no one at home.

### **Continuing Absence**

If the absence continues and the child's attendance level drops below 95%, home visits will continue and the Attendance Programme will be activated.

### **Ten Day's Absence**

The Local Authority will be notified regarding any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. The Police and/or Education Welfare Officer will be asked to conduct a welfare check.

### **Penalty Notices**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

Buile Hill Visual Arts College may request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to be issued in the following circumstances:

If a minimum of 10 sessions or 5 school days of unauthorised absence are taken during the current term for:

- Overt Truancy
- Lack of medical evidence when requested via the schools Attendance Programme
- Parental Condoned Absences
- Holidays in Term Time (only in exceptional circumstances) not authorised by the Headteacher
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Heads of House to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. Intervention takes place for all students with attendance below 95%.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the parent/carer is alerted by letter and the Attendance Coordinator or Head of House will work with the student and their family. If there is no improvement, the parent/carer is invited into school. As outlined in the Attendance Programme, various strategies are used to support students and their parent/carers in achieving regular attendance. The school will refer to the School Health Advisor if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer. The Attendance Officer or the Attendance Coordinator will invite parents into school to discuss any issues and offer practical support and advice.

### **Local Authority “Fast Track to Court”**

If a student attendance falls below 90% the school will refer them to the “Fast Track Protocol” guidelines as outlined below.

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any other information that has been passed to other students.

### **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the student that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parent/carers of their responsibility to ensure that their children receive an education.

The Attendance Coordinator and the Attendance Officer will monitor and offer support to students and their families where the attendance level is between 90 – 95%. An Attendance Agreement is used with all midyear admissions.

Prior to whole school holidays, text alerts are used to remind parent/carers of school opening and closing dates.

### **Holidays in term time**

Holidays during term time are not allowed unless exceptional circumstances, this will come into force on 1st September 2013.

However, parent/carers must apply in advance for permission using the Request for Leave of Absence Form which is available from the School Main Reception, for exceptional circumstances only.

If parent/carers remove their child from school for the purpose of a family holiday without permission a Local Authority Penalty Notice will be applied for by the School, which will lead to a Fine.

### **Attendance Awards**

School uses the system to reward students who have good or improving attendance:

#### 100% Attendance

At the end of each academic year rewards are presented to individual students achieving 100%, at the Presentation Evening.

### **The Registration System**

The School uses a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. National codes are used to record attendance information.

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.  
Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances

<b>Z</b>	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

## **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
  - [b] To any special needs he may have.
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:  
The Education [Student Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

## **Attendance Programme**

The purpose of this Programme is to identify unmet needs to improve outcomes for our students through working in partnership with students, their families and the wider agencies.

The expectation is that each student will have a minimum attendance of 95%. This expectation is communicated to parent/carers and students on admission, through various forms of communication such as termly in whole school mail shots, weekly Form Time and through assemblies. The Attendance Coordinator and the Attendance Officer monitor attendance on a daily basis working closely with the Form Tutors, Subject Tutors, Faculty Leaders and Deputy Head. Parent/carers are aware via the school prospectus, website and mail shots of who to contact school if their child is absent.

A first day response to absence is operated, if by day two of the absence no contact has been made and we are unaware of the reason for the absence, the Attendance Coordinator will visit the home. Home visits are carried out daily by the Attendance Coordinator.

School is aware that low attendance levels impact on students' attainments and social care issues may impact on attendance, for these reasons the Pastoral Team continually assess students' needs and school based support is tailored to meeting individual needs.

There are close working relationships with the wider agencies such as, the School Health Advisor and the Education Welfare Officer who regularly attend meetings and are readily available for consultation and advice.

The Education Welfare Officer meets regularly with Attendance Coordinator and the Attendance Officer, individual cases are discussed and actions are agreed such as Fast Track to prosecution. In cases where a decision has been taken not to authorise any further absences, agreements are made with the EWO regarding the monitoring period and attendance target e.g. a timescale is agreed upon and with no significant improvement, the EWO commences legal enforcement.

Our aim is to improve outcomes for our students through working in partnership with students, their families and the wider agencies.

A student's needs may dictate for example that a CAF is required; if so the member of staff in school will complete this with the Attendance Coordinator and the parent/carer and pupil.

### **Vulnerable Groups**

Various staff will work with all students and their parent/carers where attendance is below 95% and are classed as vulnerable.

#### **LEVEL 1 – 95% and Below**

L1 letter is issued to the parent/carer as soon as a student's attendance has 6 unauthorised absences or dips below 95%.

The pupil is spoken to by the Head of House.

#### **LEVEL 2**

If there is little or no improvement in attendance, L2 letter is issued inviting the parent/carer into school. There may be some underlying reasons why the student does not attend school. Wider agency support for the family or student may now be needed.

At Level 2 no more absences are authorised without medical evidence. Attendance is constantly monitored and the student's home visited on the first day of absence. If they reach 10 UA absences in this period, a Penalty Warning is issued.

#### **LEVEL 3**

If after two weeks there is still no improvement the parent/carers are again invited into school via the L3 letter. At this point, the School Health Advisor

and the EWO are also invited: School Health clarify any underlying medical reasons for absences. If a parent does not attend a visit is made to the home. At this meeting a decision is then made jointly with the EWO in relation to include the parent in the termly cohort of Fast Track to improve attendance: if the parent does not attend the meeting a decision is still made.

**Letters:**

**Level 1 Letter: Warning of Fixed Penalty Notice**

Parent/Guardian of

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: Warning of Fixed Penalty Notice**

It has come to my attention that (child's name)'s attendance is currently running at (figure)%.

As you may be aware the Local Authority has a policy of issuing **Fixed Penalty Notices** when any pupil accumulates 10 or more unauthorised absences. At the moment, your child has (figure) unexplained absences and a total of (figure) unauthorised absences.

As per Local Authority guidelines, you are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice if you child has any further absences.

I should be very grateful if you could contact the school's Attendance Officer, (person's name), on 0161 921 1361 to discuss this matter further and to resolve the unexplained absences.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Anna Goddard  
Raising Achievement Coordinator (Attendance)  
**Level 2 Letter: No Improvement**

Parent/Guardian,

(Date)



Dear Parent/Guardian,

I refer to my letter dated (insert date) regarding your son/daughter's attendance and notice that there has not been any improvement.

Therefore, an appointment had been made to discuss the matter further on (insert date and time), here at Buile Hill.

It is important that you attend so that we can move forward with the raising of your child's attendance.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Anna Goddard  
Raising Achievement Coordinator (Attendance)

**Level 3 Letter:**

Parent/Guardian of

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

## **Re: Attendance Panel**

I am writing to inform you that (child's name)'s absence has still continued to rise regardless of school's support.

Therefore, referrals have now been made to: School Health, the Educational Welfare Officer, the School Governors and the School Attendance Officer, and you are now required to attend an Attendance Panel meeting on (date) at (time) here at Buile Hill Visual Arts College.

If there is an ongoing medical problem you must inform the School Health Service at this meeting. It would also be advisable to bring any supporting documentation with you to the meeting, e.g. Hospital letters, list of prescribed medication etc.

It is essential that you attend this meeting. I must advise you that if you fail to attend, the meeting will go ahead without you and a decision will be made in your absence.

By law, it is an offence if a parent fails to secure their child's attendance at school. If a child has 10 or more unauthorised absences, Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers Local Authority Children's Services to issue Fixed Penalty Warnings.

I sincerely hope that this course of action will not be necessary and we look forward to meeting you on (date and time of meeting).

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Anna Goddard  
Raising Achievement Coordinator (Attendance)

## **Fast Track Protocol (FT)**

### **Specific Evidence**

The FT Prosecution period starts on day 3 AFTER the Phase 1 Letter is issued by the EWO, therefore the schools attendance evidence to prove FT is based on previous attendance.

Buile Hill Visual Arts College evidence must be brought to all Fast Track meetings.

The FT chronology must detail all contact and responses from parent/carers regarding attendance and dates when the school Level Letters were sent. It will also detail if a parent/carer arrived/or did not arrive (DNA) at L2 meeting, points discussed and actions agreed. If the parent DNA, the FT Chronology will detail what action the Buile Hill Visual Arts College. This will be recorded on the FT chronology form.

The FT Chronology will detail actions agreed with parents during any communication.

Once a FT referral has been made by Buile Hill Visual Arts College it is vital the evidence building continues. This means home visits/phone calls/discussions with the student/parent/carer will continue. The FT chronology will reflect these actions.

If applicable, the FT chronology must also state why a Penalty Warning was not issued prior to FT.

### **Criteria**

90% to 94.9% - Buile Hill Visual Arts College to request a Penalty Warning. (PW)

90% and below – Buile Hill Visual Arts College refer for Fast Track.

In some cases, requesting a PW is not appropriate and refers directly to Fast Track.

If Fast Track is requested completion of a Section 9 is required. This is a legal document used as evidence in court to prove what interventions have taken place prior and during the Fast Track period. The information provided must be correct, therefore keeping the FT files up to date is important especially if the case goes to court. If the parent/s plead not guilty Buile Hill Visual Arts College will be requested to appear at Manchester Magistrates Court to provide evidence.

*This document is completed by Buile Hill Visual Arts College School*

**SALFORD CITY COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT OF WITNESS**

**(C.J. Act 1967., s.9; M.C. Act 1980, ss5A (3)(a) and 5B; M.C. Rules 1981, r.70)**

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**STATEMENT OF:**

**Age of Witness (if over 18 enter "over 18"): Over 18**

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**CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANT OR KEY EVENT</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>

*This is the Witness Statement completed by Buile Hill Visual Arts College.*

**SALFORD CITY COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT OF WITNESS**

**(C.J. Act 1967., s.9; M.C. Act 1980, ss5A (3)(a) and 5B; M.C. Rules 1981, r.70)**

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**STATEMENT OF:**

**Age of Witness (if over 18 enter "over 18"): Over 18**

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I am a (job title) based at (full address of school). (Child's name) resides at (address) with their parent, (parents name).

***Discuss back ground to case, why you made a referral to Education Welfare Officer. Discuss Attendance Panel, meetings or anything that has significant relevance to the case.***

***Exhibit any letters that have been sent by the school to the parents. PROVIDE COPIES.***

***Exhibit any minutes that are relevant to the case. PROVIDE COPIES.***

***Include Chronology of Significant Events (exhibit /02) this should list text messages, letters and phone calls to parents and any other significant events around and during fast track period.***

The facts and matters set out in this statement were compiled from documents held by the school. The documents to which I have referred form part of the school's records maintained in the course of its profession. These records were compiled by people who had or may reasonably be supposed to have had, personal knowledge of the matters dealt with in the course of their profession but of which those people cannot reasonably be expected, to have recollection of those matters having regard to the time which has elapsed since they created the document and to all the relevant circumstances.