

# Bedales Prep School Attendance and Missing Child Policy

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*Tick relevant box(es) ✓ how this Policy should appear:*

Inspector Folder		✓
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Internal only		
Parent Portal		✓
For Students/Students		✓

# Bedales Prep School Attendance and Missing Child Policy

**This policy sets out the School's arrangements for attendance and our response in the event of a missing child. It is our belief that students being present in school and attending lessons and co-curricular activities provides the best outcome for learning and development. Therefore, students, parents and staff must work together to enable students to be present in school and in lessons and co-curricular activities.**

All staff have a duty of care to all students at Bedales. It is their responsibility to ensure that students are safe and to take action if they are absent.

In the writing of this document we agree to working within the guidelines of the latest statutory guidance for schools published by the DFE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

## **Attendance and Registration**

At Bedales Prep, we see education as a partnership between the family, the child and the school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for your child, and we look forward to your support in meeting this objective. Given these factors, this policy aims to promote students' welfare.

Any pattern of non-attendance, or frequent, regular or prolonged absence from School is viewed as a safeguarding concern by the School and local authorities. Therefore, staff work with parents and students to ensure that attendance is within the average range or better. Where it is not, the Pastoral Team would work with parents and the student to determine what we can do to improve it or support a student who is unable to come into School. This may include sharing information with other agencies, including social care and GPs. In these instances, it may be appropriate to identify push and pull factors for attendance and non-attendance and use these to inform the completion of an EBSA Care Plan.

- Outstanding attendance 98% and above
- Good Attendance 96%-97%
- Average attendance 94-95%
- Below average attendance 90%-93%
- Persistent low attendance below 90%
- Chronic low attendance Below 80%

Parents are informed of attendance expectations and attendance percentages are celebrated where they are excellent and discussed with parents where they are below expectations.

Attendance is analysed according to groups and trends on a half-termly basis. The pastoral team around the child respond to cases where attendance is persistent or chronic with a personalised approach dependent on circumstances.

The School adheres to local safeguarding guidance regarding absence. There are further details in the Bedales School' Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy', found here: [Policies | Bedales School](#)).

Absence is always followed up and the Missing Child procedures are set out at the end of this document.

### **Registration of children**

Schools must take an attendance register twice a day (AM and PM), which is a legal document that is kept for five years.

All children register at the start of the day. For Groups' children, this is with their class tutor and for Blocks' children with their tutor and is recorded using iSAMS. The reception team check all these registers after registration closes and will telephone home if a child has not registered and a message has not been received detailing their absence. Children who arrive at the school after 8.30am should sign in at Reception. The exception to this is on Wednesday when Blocks' children register in The Well before going to Squads. Registration closes at 9.00am.

Following morning registration, the reception team produces a Fire List which is kept at Reception in case it is required. Absentees can be viewed on iSAMS and is constantly reviewed throughout the day.

Blocks' students will register in their tutor bases in the afternoon at 12.40pm using iSAMS. Groups' children are registered as they come into lunch and this list is transferred onto iSAMS. The exception to this is Blocks' children on a Tuesday who register with the Ensemble with which they are involved.

On a Saturday morning, Blocks' children are registered as a Year group in the Well (Block 1) and Bees' Barn (Block 2). School starts at 8.40am on Saturday.

Any absences will be recorded with the DFE recommended code depending on the type of absence. Absences fall into two main categories:

- **Authorised** – those which schools can give permission for
- **Unauthorised** – those which they will not

Registration Codes 2024-25

Symbol	Title	Note	Government Code	Statistical Definition	USE on AM/PM Register	Shows in Registration	Available for OOS
<b>Present Codes</b>							
Λ	Present		Λ	Attended	✓	✓	✓
<	Present but absent from timetabled lesson	Use for rehearsals, workshops on site or for students not in sport - this is not for use on AM/PM registers.	Λ	Attended	X	✓	✓
<b>Absence Codes (student off-site)</b>							
I	Illness (Offsite)		I	authorised absence	✓	✓	✓
M	Medical/Dental Appointment (offsite inc. Med Centre)		M	authorised absence	✓	✓	✓
P	Participating in a sporting activity (offsite)		P	Attending an approved education	✓	✓	X
V	Educational visit or Trip (Offsite)		V	Attending an approved education	✓	✓	✓
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance		C	authorised absence	✓	✓	✓
C2	Leave of Absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Can be used for non-attendance at lessons where a temporary reduced timetable has been agreed. MUST NOT BE USED IF STUDENT MISSES LESSONS THEY ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND. IN THIS INSTANCE USE THE APPROPRIATE ABSENCE CODE	C2	authorised absence	✓	✓	✓
X	Not required to attend	Use for Nursery pupils who are not of compulsory school age or for Sixth Form students where they have no lessons during the session they have not attended	X	Not a possible attendance	✓	X	✓
E	Suspended or Excluded (Offsite)		E	Authorised absence	✓	X	✓
R	Religious Observance		R	Authorised absence	✓	X	✓
S	Study Leave (Offsite)		S	Authorised absence	✓	✓	✓
N	No Reason Yet Provided for Absence	This code must not remain on the register longer than 5 days. If no reason for the absence can be established within 5 days the code must be changed to '0'.	N	unauthorised absence	✓	✓	✓
G	Holiday Not Granted by the school		G	unauthorised absence	✓	X	✓
O	Unauthorised Absence		O	unauthorised absence	✓	✓	✓
U	Arrived in school after registration closed (later than 30 mins after start of session)	Use of this code will mark student absent for entire AM or PM session. This code should not be used for Lesson Registration	U	unauthorised absence	X	X	✓
<b>Absence Codes (student on-site)</b>							
I2	Illness (Boarding House)	Use where student is ill in boarding house and will miss a lesson. NB - student must be marked present on-site for AM/PM registers	I	Authorised absence	X	X	✓
F	Study Leave (on-site)	Use where a student will not attend lessons because they are studying for an exam. NB - student must be marked present on-site for AM/PM registers	S	authorised absence	X	X	✓

### At Risk Students

The pastoral team compile a 'Watchlist' of pupils each week. This list is logged on iSAMS using the traffic light system so that all staff can be particularly vigilant should any students on the Watchlist not be registered. Reception is also made aware of names, for Registration purposes. These students are flagged with traffic lights on iSAMS.

### Registering Absence from School

If a child is ill, parents should e-mail ([bedalespreception@bedales.org.uk](mailto:bedalespreception@bedales.org.uk)) or telephone Reception (01730 300 200) before 8.00am on the first day of absence, giving a reason for absence. We will always telephone the home on the first day of an unexplained absence to determine the reason for absence.

### Requests for Absence from School

Children are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless for a trip or visiting a sporting fixture, the dates of which will have been notified to you in advance. If parents do request to take a child off-site during the school day, written permission is required, and the child should sign out at Reception.

If a parent wishes their child to leave the school site with anyone other than those adults identified as having parental responsibility, they should do so by informing Reception by either ringing (permission should be witnessed by another adult) or by confirming in writing via email.

We always send parents the term dates over a year in advance in order that you can arrange your holidays without disrupting your child's education.

For dental or medical appointments, parents are asked to notify Reception and the child's tutor at least three working days in advance.

### Requests for Exceptional Circumstances for Leave

We understand that there are occasions when a child may need to be absent from school for

important reasons. While we aim to keep absences to a minimum, we are more than happy to consider leave requests under exceptional circumstances.

Requests for exceptional absence must be made via the request of absence form on the parent portal at least two weeks in advance. The Head will receive notification of this, and his PA will reply to you with the outcome of your request.

Leave may be granted for the following exceptional reasons:

1. Family Emergencies: For example, the serious illness or loss of a close family member.
2. Religious or Cultural Observances: Important events or ceremonies that require a child's presence.
3. Health Needs: Where absence is necessary due to medical reasons, supported by relevant documentation.
4. Educational Opportunities: If your child has the chance to participate in an educational experience, such as a performance, competition, or an enriching external program.
5. Special Family Events: Occasions such as weddings or family events that require travel or presence.

If the requested absence is during term time, then the request will be investigated in greater detail before a decision as to the outcome of the request is reached – this may involve phone calls with parents or members of staff seeking advice from external organisations.

If the request involves a visit to a country with a high prevalence of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), advice can be sought from the following resources:

[PDF FGM Schools Guidance 18.06.2019 \(nationalfgmcentre.org.uk\)](https://www.nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/PDF_FGM_Schools_Guidance_18.06.2019)

[Female genital mutilation: help and advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-female-genital-mutilation-centre)

### **Day Children**

All day children are required to be in school by 8.20 am. The school day for Groups (Years 4-6) ends at 4.10pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and at 4.30pm on Fridays. The finish time on Wednesday will depend on a student's choice – options are either 2.00pm, 4.00pm after activities and 5.30pm. Matches have their own collection times which are sent to parents and published on sports noticeboards.

The school day for Blocks (Years 7-8) finishes at 5.30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The finish time on Wednesday will depend on a student's choice – options are either 2.00pm, 4.00pm after activities and 5.30pm. Matches have their own collection times which are sent to parents and published on sports noticeboards. On Fridays, Blocks children should be collected at 4.30pm. If Saturday school is in session, then Blocks students are expected in school for registration from 8.30am and should be collected at 12.40pm.

Students can stay on for activities each weekday which finish at 5.30pm for Groups and at 7pm for Blocks.

## **Boarders**

Your child's boarding house (Dunhurst Boarding House as it is called at Bedales Prep) is central to their life at Bedales Prep. All children are cared for by House Parents and a team consisting of Matrons and Gap Assistants. Together, they will be responsible for your child during term, including ensuring that they are safely occupied outside normal school hours. We expect your child to live with you or their guardian when they are away from school on Leave Weekends and at half-term during term time. We ask you to give written authority to your child's House Parent before they leave school to stay with another family. We expect all students to sign out whenever they leave the school and to sign in on return.

Parents or Guardians should contact the boarding team via email ([boarding@dunhurst@bedales.co.uk](mailto:boarding@dunhurst@bedales.co.uk)) or by telephoning the Boarding House if their child(ren) is taken ill during a Leave Weekend. Parents or Guardians should communicate formally with the school upon their child's return to school giving a reason for the absence. We will always telephone home if your child is more than 1 hour late in returning from a Leave Weekend.

All children will register on Flat at the end of evening activities (7.00pm) and then again at bedtime.

## **Activities**

Children attending activities are registered prior to their activity using SOCS.

### Lessons

Students are also registered when attending lessons and Reception is notified if a student has an unexplained reason for their absence. If required, the Missing Students protocols are then enacted.

## **Annual Census**

All schools in membership of ISC take part in that organisation's annual census of students, staff and expenditure, etc. From January 2009 it has been mandatory to include student ethnic monitoring data, using the same methodology as the maintained sector.

## **Contact with Local Authorities**

The School complies with local authority procedures<sup>1</sup> and its statutory duties in relation to students' arrival, attendance and departure from school. Local Authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools may therefore receive an enquiry about whether they are educating a specific child. Before deleting a student's name from the register, the School is required to alert the student's Local Authority as soon as possible after a student of compulsory school age is taken out of School for any of the following reasons:

- to be home educated,
- when the family has apparently moved away,
- when the child has been certified as medically unfit to attend,
- when the child is in custody for more than four months or has been permanently excluded,
- when the child has been absent without authority after 10 consecutive days of authorised leave,

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<sup>1</sup> [Children Missing Education - Guidance for Local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/274000/Children_Missing_Education_-_Guidance_for_Local_authorities.pdf)

- when the child fails to attend school regularly,
- or when the child is removed from the school roll without his or her next school being known.

In addition, the School notifies the local authority if it cannot establish a reason for a student's absence or has concerns about the reason.

## Missing Child Procedures

NB – A copy of this section of the policy can be found in a red folder on the wall behind Reception.

Upon first suspicion that a child is missing, having checked with Reception for knowledge of the child's absence, the member of staff concerned should inform the most senior member of staff available: Head / Deputy Head Pastoral / Deputy Head Academic / Head of Blocks / Head of Groups / Assistant Head of Blocks. This senior member of staff will base themselves in the Deputy Head Pastoral's Office and will co-ordinate the search. The aim initially is to ascertain the last known whereabouts and circumstances of the child suspected of being missing.

Helpful questions to ask at this point:

- What is the child's timetable? This can be found on iSAMS.
- Has the child got a music lesson? Or an MRS? This can be found on iSAMS.
- Has the child got an activity in another area of the site? E.g., tennis
- Has the child swapped activities and not let the school office know?
- Is the child in a counselling session?
- Is the child in their known 'safe space'?

The school site will then be searched by area (simultaneously) by staff (coordinated by the senior member of staff). Each member of staff involved will have a two-way radio to keep in contact throughout the process.

- Changing Rooms & Toilets
- All activity locations that day
- Classrooms, Well area, Library & ICT suites
- Bees' Barn
- Nest/Scoff's Café
- ODW
- Cobb, Workshop and Cobb's Field
- Sports fields, Astro pitch; Prep-prep Orchard and surrounding area
- Boarding Flats and Communal areas



# Appendix

## Missing Child Policy Checklist

Upon first suspicion that a child is missing, having checked with Reception for knowledge of the child's absence, the member of staff concerned should inform the most senior member of staff available: Head / Deputy Head Pastoral / Deputy Head Academic / Head of Blocks / Head of Groups / Assistant Head of Blocks. This senior member of staff will base themselves in the Deputy Head Pastoral's Office and will co-ordinate the search. The aim initially is to ascertain last known whereabouts and circumstances of child suspected to be missing.

Helpful questions to ask at this point:

What is the child's timetable? This can be found on iSAMS.	
Has the child got a music lesson? Or an MRS? This can be found on iSAMS.	
Has the child got an activity in another area of the site? E.g. tennis Or changed activity?	
Is the child in their known 'safe space'?	

The school site will then be searched by area (simultaneously) by staff (coordinated by the 'senior member of staff'). Each member of staff involved will have a two-way radio to keep in contact throughout the process.

Boys' Changing Rooms, toilets & Blue Room	
Girls' Changing Rooms & toilet	
Classrooms, Well area, Library & ICT suites	
Nest, Scoff's, JB's, The Hall & Music Corridor	
ODW & Bees' Barn	
Cobb, Workshop & Cobb's Field	
Sports' Field, Dunannie Orchard & surrounding area	
Boarding Wings, Loft & Communal Areas	
All activity locations for that day?	

If the search is successful, report back to the 'senior member of staff' using the two-way radios. Also inform Reception immediately.

If the search is unsuccessful:

- Report back to senior member of staff.
- Sound fire alarm for check of full school register.
- If the above is completed and they are still not in attendance, telephone parents of day students to check they have not been picked up and not signed out. If a boarder, telephone parents to inform them.

Instigate a further search with staff members present. The search is coordinated by two-way radio by a senior member of staff using the Deputy Head Pastoral's office:

- by car down Bell Hill, past the railway station, through Petersfield.
- by car through Steep, then up Alton Road.

- by foot/bike past sand quarry, across footbridge, and pedestrian route to Petersfield (Tilmore Road).
- by foot: Bedales.
- in the case of a day child, a search by car may be organised in the appropriate direction.

Police to be informed about the missing child after all the reasonable checking and searching stages have been undertaken or before if initial investigations raise bigger concerns (i.e., child seen getting to an unknown person's car).

Common sense and flexibility are required, but probably no more than 1 hour before police should be contacted. Give the police details of circumstances and as much detail of the child as possible (including clothing, home address, telephone number and photographs taken from iSAMS). It may be advisable to contact Petersfield Railway Station as a result of police advice.

### Missing Child Policy Recording Sheet

Date & Time of Incident:	
Name of student involved:	
Names of members of staff involved (identify senior member):	
Description of Incident	
Date & Time of Report	
Member of staff recording information	
Information sent to SMT for review – to be signed by Head	
Action (if applicable) to be taken by Bedales Prep	