12. Attendance Policy

Executive Principal	Head of Education
Karyn Walton	Dr Laura Hillman
November 2025	November 2025
Policy Ref:	BIST2025 Att-Vr.3
Next Review Due:	August 2026

Contents

Aims

At BIST, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Rewarding good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy draws on the good practice outlined in Tunisian legislation and the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance. In writing this policy the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance have been referred to:

- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Equality Act (2010)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments.)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)
- Children Missing Education (August 2024)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Holding the Principals to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 **Attendance Champions: Primary: Maria Mattiace & Secondary: Karyn Walton**

They are responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy.
- Monitoring school-level absence data, analysing and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Leading attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Implementing specific strategies to address poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Ensuring the correct attendance templates are used for consistency to communicate clearly with parents.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns.

3.3 The Front Office

The front office is responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absences, informing teachers, who can then record this on iSAMs.
- Daily calls to parents to follow up on unexplained/unauthorised absences.
- Using analysis of attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

3.4 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for

- Recording attendance daily on iSAMs, morning and afternoon.
- Checking for any pupils missing from classes not marked as absent on iSAMs and raising this with the front office.

3.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Making sure their child attends on time every day.
- Calling the school to report their child's absence before 08:00 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Providing the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensuring that, where possible, any appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, parents should inform the front office at their earliest opportunity.

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time

Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

Our attendance register is on iSAMs (the school management information system used at BIST). The attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and pupil attendance is checked by the relevant teacher in the first lesson after lunch.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Attending work experience.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not, if unauthorised procedural steps will be followed.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:15.

-The register for the first session will be taken at 08:15 and will be kept open until 08:30.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school front office. Front office staff will then inform the appropriate teacher.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by calling or emailing the front office. The front office must then update the appropriate teacher and Security Lead.

We do however encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed it will be marked as late on iSAMs.
- After the register has closed it will be marked as absent on iSAMs.

4.5 Following up on an unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Input information on iSAMS as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the DSL will follow up in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels on termly reports.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Executive Principal will grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at her discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The Executive Principal considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, in writing to the Executive Principal. She may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance.
- Family matters e.g. a wedding.
- Study leave.

- University visits.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is celebrated in assemblies and on occasion on displays. Attendance is part of the reporting process, awards are given to pupils termly and at the end of the academic year for excellent or perfect attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Champion runs attendance reports on a half-termly basis to identify and evaluate any patterns for individuals or groups of pupils. Patterns will be discussed by the Attendance Champion and decisions will be made on next steps based on circumstances. This may involve the DSL.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and develop strategies to address these patterns.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to SLT, teachers and the DSL/School Counsellor as needed, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Inform parents using the relevant attendance template according to the issue.

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services e.g. counselling to remove the barriers to attendance.

8. Missing Children

Attendance Champions: Primary: Maria Mattiace & Secondary: Karyn Walton

8.1 Preventative Strategies

- Effective supervision in place; duty rotas and security team.
- Registration in the morning and after lunch on iSAMs.
- Security team informed of any children leaving campus early e.g. dental and doctor appointments.

8.2 Actions for Missing Child/Children.

- Security and Attendance Champion informed: Security team to check the child has not left the site.
- Check the school environment: including toilets, gardens and any small 'hiding' spaces.
- Call parents to gain further information and double check if the child was collected early.
- Inform the police.
- Lead Security Guard to liaise between school and police.
- Executive Principal to keep all parties informed.

8.3 After School Pick-up.

- Duty teacher to check with the school office and security team to check whether the child has already left the site.
- Check the school environment: including toilets, gardens and any small 'hiding' spaces.
- Call parents to gain further information and double check if the child was collected early.
- Inform the police.
- Lead Security Guard to liaise between school and police.
- Executive Principal to keep all parties informed.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1

Expectations for the Attendance Champion

Strategic Leadership and Oversight

Lead the development, implementation, and regular review of the school's attendance policy, ensuring it aligns with statutory guidance and the school's values.

Maintain a strategic overview of attendance across all year groups and pupil cohorts, including vulnerable groups such as EAL and SEN.

Data Analysis and Monitoring

Use attendance data rigorously to identify patterns, trends, and barriers to attendance.

Monitor attendance at whole-school and cohort levels, including persistent and severe absence.

Report findings regularly to the Executive and Governors with clear recommendations for action.

Collaboration and Communication

Act as the main point of contact for attendance-related issues for staff, pupils, and parents.

Liaise effectively with class teachers/form tutors, pastoral leads, families, and external agencies to coordinate support for pupils with attendance challenges.

Communicate attendance expectations clearly and consistently to staff, pupils, and parents, reinforcing the school's culture of high attendance.

Intervention and Support

Implement and oversee targeted interventions for pupils with attendance difficulties, including early identification and timely support.

Ensure reasonable adjustments and tailored strategies are in place for pupils facing specific barriers (e.g., SEN, health issues).

Coordinate access to wider support services and formalise support plans with local authorities when necessary.

Promotion and Incentivisation

Champion the importance of attendance across the school community, embedding it into the school culture and values.

Develop and implement initiatives to promote good attendance and punctuality, including incentives and recognition schemes.

Policy and Compliance

Ensure the attendance policy is accessible, published, and communicated to all stakeholders.

Keep the policy under regular review, incorporating feedback from pupils, parents, and staff.

Oversee processes for managing absence, including first-day calling, follow-up on unexplained absences, communicating using the attendance templates and handling requests for leave.

Training and Development

Provide training and guidance to staff on attendance expectations, procedures, and strategies for supporting pupils.

Keep up to date with UK and local attendance guidance and best practices.

This role is vital to fostering a whole-school culture of high attendance, which supports pupil achievement, wellbeing, and belonging.

Appendix 2: Registration Codes for iSAMs

- For children present in the morning - continue to use the relevant present code.
- If they leave during the day then please use the appropriate code available in iSAMs.
- If a child is absent during registration, use the relevant code from iSAMs.

Example Codes Below - however please use the most appropriate code in iSAMs (select from the pop up list already available)

B - Educated Off-site

P - Participating in approved sport activity

V - Educational visit or trip, organised by school

W - Work experience, organised by school

Y - Unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (part or the full school campus is closed, disruption to travel, weather, political unrest…)

C - Other authorised circumstances (wedding, bereavement, family emergency, work experience abroad, part time timetable)

I - Illness

M - Medical/dental appointment

R - Religious

E - Excluded

C - Work experience abroad, part time timetable)

BIST 2025 Att-Vr.3 KW____LH