

# Birkdale High School



Birkdale  
High School

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

## Attendance Policy



## **Birkdale High School Attendance Policy**

*Date of Policy:* June 2016  
*Members of staff responsible:* Assistant Headteacher (Mr Pryor)  
*Review date:* June 2018 – every 2 years

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Birkdale High School is committed to providing all pupils with a full-time education experience that maximises each pupil's opportunities and allows each to realise their true potential. We believe that if a pupil is to benefit from education, regular, punctual attendance is crucial.

Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career; our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils.

We give high priority to communicating with parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communications systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affects a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with parents and pupils, to resolve those problems as quickly as possible.

### **STATUTORY DUTY OF SCHOOLS**

DFE guidance states "all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance, which should be set out in an **Attendance Policy**. These systems should be reviewed regularly and modified where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the school." The policy must be communicated to all parties and implemented consistently.

Schools are legally required to record pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll. The attendance register is a legal document.

### **STATUTORY DUTY OF PARENTS/CARERS**

The Education Act 1996 Section 7 requires parents or carers to ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

### **The School will:**

- Work hard to ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the pupil registration
- Ensure staff receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning to school following a period of absence
- Promote a culture which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school; including learners, parents/carers, teachers and governors
- Promote and further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, he will be missed
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance
- Operate a robust absence management system
- Monitor, analyse and set targets to improve individual and whole school attendance levels, including statutory targets
- Work in partnership with other schools, agencies and the Local Education Authority, within the guidelines issued by the Department for Education
- Request the use of Fixed Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders and Prosecution under section 444(1) and 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996, to enforce attendance at school, where appropriate.
- Ensure attendance will be an important feature of the School Improvement Plan
- Ensure regular evaluation of our Attendance Policy and procedures

### **Learners Must:**

- Attend regularly and punctually
- Meet or exceed the Government's minimum individual attendance requirement of 95%
- Provide a note of explanation to the Attendance Office/Reception from a parent/carer on the day of return after a period of absence
- Participate fully when action plans are put into place
- Report to Reception if leaving or arriving at any time during the school day

### **Parents/Carers should:**

- Familiarise themselves with the Whole School Attendance Policy
- Ensure children attend school regularly (**in line with the government's minimum attendance target 95%**) and punctually
- Contact school on first day of absence
- Maintain contact with school on a daily basis should absence continue. This is for Safeguarding reasons
- Explain the reason for a child's absence (unwell or not well is not considered to be an explanation)
- Provide a note/medical documentation if their child needs to leave school during the day for any reason
- Provide a note/medical documentation if their child has been absent (you must do this even if you have telephoned)
- Contact school early where problems with attendance are emerging
- Support the school in intervention and action plans, including attending meetings when requested to
- Participate in Parenting Contracts

### Governors will:

- Agree targets for attendance at school in line with DFE guidelines
- Participate in Parenting Contracts
- Participate in Attendance Panels with appropriate staff
- Support the school with intervention and action plans
- Receive termly reports on attendance and review the policy annually

### **Rights, Roles and Responsibilities**

- Parents and Carers
- Learners
- School Staff
- Governors

This has been developed to complement this policy, and identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance.

### Included is guidance on:

- The School Day
- Systems and strategies
- What constitutes unauthorised absence?
- Persistent Absence
- Leave during term time
- Use of the Fixed Penalty Notice or Prosecution
- Children Missing Education
- Removal from roll
- School Staff; rights, roles and responsibilities (see Attendance Support Plan)
- Review of the Whole School Attendance Policy

### **The School Day:**

08.50 – 09.10	<b>Form time and official a.m. register* (pupils need to be in form for 08.50. We recommend pupils arrive no later than 08.40)</b>
09.10 – 10.10	Lesson 1
10.10 – 11.10	Lesson 2
11.10 – 11.25	Break
11.25 – 12.25	Lesson 3
12.25 – 13.10	Lunch
13.10 – 14.10	<b>Lesson 4 and official p.m. register*</b>
14.10 – 15.10	Lesson 5

**\*Staff will take the register electronically, during every lesson. Only the official register (session attendance) will count towards pupils' overall percentage attendance.**

### **Registration and Punctuality:**

Morning registration will take place at 08.50, during form time. Any pupil arriving to form after 08.50 is defined as late. Afternoon registration will take place at the beginning of lesson 4. Registers close at 09.30 a.m. Any pupil arriving after the register has closed will be coded accordingly\*.

**\*Arriving after the register has closed is classed as unauthorised absence. Persistent late arrival is classed as truancy.** Punctuality to school and to lessons will be closely monitored and the appropriate interventions implemented.

## **Systems and Strategies:**

Birkdale High School uses electronic systems to monitor the attendance and punctuality of every pupil. We analyse data, patterns and trends. We operate a 'traffic light system' (please see supporting document 'appendices') to help with rewards, setting targets for improvement when needed. The aim of this process is to support learners and their parents/carers in reviewing attendance, and to ensure we remain compliant with Statutory Guidance.

### **First day contact:**

Parents have a responsibility to contact the school on the first day of absence, to explain the reason for the absence (unwell or not well is not considered to be an explanation). You have a further responsibility to maintain daily contact and positive communication with the school, should the absence continue.

If your child is absent, and you do not contact school to explain their absence, we will try to contact you via our first day response system 'Group Call'. This is in line with national Safeguarding procedures. **It is essential that the school has up to date contact telephone numbers and address information at all times.**

**All absences should be reported to school before 9am, on each day of absence.** All absence(s) must be followed up with a note (to the Attendance Administrative Officer) on your child's return to school and/or medical documentation, if requested.

If you know at the outset that your child will be absent for a number of days (e.g. hospital admission), we may authorise their absence for a longer period of time, but request regular updates. If appropriate, work may be provided during such absence(s).

If a pupil has low attendance and/or has a lot of time off due to illness, we may request your permission for our school nurse to contact you. Additionally, we may request medical documentation is provided before we are able to continue authorising the absence. If we have requested medical documentation, any absence will remain **unauthorised** until it is received. If no medical documentation is provided, our formal monitoring process will begin (refer to supporting documentation 'Attendance Support Plan').

### **Rewards and Sanctions:**

Pupils with good, most improved and in particular 100% attendance, are recognised and rewarded in assemblies.

Pupils with poor attendance and punctuality, and their families, will be offered support via the schools robust systems for managing absence.

Where parents/carers are clearly failing to fulfil their legal obligation to ensure their child's attendance (Education Act 1996 section 444(1) and 444(1a), Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003), prosecution will be recommended. Prosecution will also be pursued when a Fixed Penalty Notice fails to ensure improvement or is unpaid.

### **What constitutes unauthorised absence(s):**

- Truancy, whole day, part of the day or lessons (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- Absence which is condoned by the family without a valid reason
- Unexplained absence
- Leave taken without prior permission from the Head; which may incur a Fixed Penalty (see 'Use of the Fixed Penalty Notice')
- Late arrival, after the register has closed

Medical appointments will be authorised for half a day (1 session), unless there are special, pre-arranged circumstances. Proof of attending or an appointment card/letter must be provided.

## **Persistent Absence:**

A learner is classed as a persistent absentee when their attendance is 90% or less at any point during the academic year. Any absence, whether authorised or unauthorised, is included.

Learners who are identified as a persistent absentee, (and their families) will be supported via the school's systems for addressing persistent absence (refer to supporting documentation 'Attendance Support Plan').

From February 2004, the law gives powers to the school and other designated bodies to request Fixed Penalty Notices as an alternative to Prosecution, when a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. When school deems this appropriate, usually as a last resort, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent/carer.

## **Leave during term time:**

Leave during term time will be considered (by the Headteacher) in '**exceptional circumstances**' only. Applications must be submitted in advance and in writing, for the attention of the Headteacher. A form is available from the school office.

You will be informed of the Headteacher's decision in writing. A copy of the letter will be kept on file.

If your application is declined, and you remove your son without permission, a copy of our letter to you confirming our decision will be sent to the Manager of the Attendance Welfare Service at the Local Authority; along with a request for consideration to be given to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice to you.

## **Use of the Fixed Penalty Notice and Prosecution:**

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly (BHS target is in line with the Government's minimum attendance target, 95%) and those absences are classed as unauthorised. In every case, a learner must have had a minimum of five school days lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or nine days during two consecutive terms. All unauthorised absence is included, whether consecutive or cumulative.

The school never takes such action lightly. We make every effort to work with parents/carers and the individual learner to improve attendance. However, where intervention is deemed ineffective, we will actively pursue such action to ensure we meet statutory requirements. Where parents/carers are clearly failing to fulfil their legal obligation (Education Act 1996 section 444(1) and 444(1a), Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) prosecution will be recommended.

## **Children Missing Education:**

Definition:-

- The child or young person fails to attend school without offering a reasonable explanation.
- The school has been unable to locate the pupil at the last known address or any of the contact numbers.
- The Parents/Carers have failed to offer an explanation in relation to the child or young person's absence or a change of school or any other education provision.

**Between days 1-5** – We will make all investigations to determine the whereabouts or reasons for absence from school

**Between days 6-19** – We will refer to our Attendance Welfare Officer, who, depending on the outcome of necessary enquiries/home visit, may contact the Attendance and Welfare Service, via a 'missing pupils' checklist'. A copy of which will be kept on file, in school.

Movement of children in the UK between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally, by each local authority. Movement of children whose families move/take them abroad is tracked by the UK Border Agency.

Schools are legally required to advise the Local Authority (Sefton) about the details of all children admitted and removed from the roll of their school. No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the school and the Attendance and Welfare Service.

The attendance team is responsible for identifying learners who are missing education and for liaising with the Local Authority and informing them of any removals from roll.

### **Removal from Roll:**

School will be guided by the local authority in accordance with the criteria set out in Regulation 9 of the Education (Learner Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997 and 2001).

### **Staff – Rights, roles and responsibilities:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name of Staff Member</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Headteacher	Mr G Bourgade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has overall responsibility to ensure that the policy is implemented, and to raise the profile of attendance and punctuality in the school and the wider community.</li> </ul>
Assistant Headteacher	Mr D Pryor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoral Care – including Attendance, Behaviour &amp; Safeguarding</li> </ul>
Head of Year	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the attendance and punctuality of their year group.</li> <li>Support and supervise late detentions.</li> <li>Contact parents where attendance/punctuality is a concern.</li> <li>Place learners on report where absence/lateness persists.</li> <li>Action requests for Fixed Penalty Notices in liaison with the Attendance Welfare Officer and Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)</li> </ul>
Form Tutors	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise directly with the Attendance Administrative Officer when a learner advises you of an impending absence or produces a note to cover an absence.</li> <li>Stress the importance of attendance in direct correlation to achievement.</li> <li>Ensure the register is marked promptly and accurately, recording late arrivals during the registration period.</li> <li>Outside of form time, refer learners to the main office for their attendance mark.</li> <li>Monitor the attendance and punctuality of the learners in their form.</li> <li>Use merits, rewards and sanctions.</li> <li>Notify the Head of Year of any concerns/changes in attendance pattern.</li> </ul>
Teaching Staff	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the register is marked within the first 10 minutes of the start of every lesson.</li> <li>Ensure learners arriving to lessons late are recorded correctly; refer to attendance office if in doubt.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note any changes in learner's lesson attendance pattern and inform Form teacher and Head of Year.</li> </ul>
Attendance Team	Attendance Administrative Officer and Attendance Welfare Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively manage the day to day administration of attendance registers</li> <li>• Monitor the consistency and accuracy of marking of registers</li> <li>• Record late arrivals after registers close</li> <li>• Maintain up to date fire registers</li> <li>• Operative a robust absence management process including:- managing the first day absence contact system; following up unexplained absence/s; generating and circulating effective reports to facilitate early intervention; analysing report data and acting upon it; facilitating Attendance Panel Meetings; keeping appropriate records, working closely with the pastoral team, partner schools, other agencies and the LEA</li> <li>• Conduct home visits</li> <li>• Assist with Parenting Contracts</li> <li>• Work within and further develop procedures for dealing with learners and their parents/carers in relation to attendance/punctuality concerns</li> <li>• Work in partnership with external agencies to support learners and families</li> <li>• Document and collate evidence for referrals to the LEA for enforcement action</li> </ul>