



The  
**Birkenhead Park**  
School

# **Attendance Policy**

## **2023-2024**

The Birkenhead Park School

<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	November 2023
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<b>Next review due by:</b>	November 2024
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### 1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every student 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 students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school – Stuart Brady
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The Head of School**

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Peter Mee and can be contacted via (0151 652 1574, or at [mee@birkenheadparkschool.com](mailto:mee@birkenheadparkschool.com)).

#### **3.4 The Attendance Manager**

The school attendance manager is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Head of School
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Advising the Head of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The school have a dedicated Attendance Team to support students. The team consists of: -

- Kellie Tisdale, Trust Senior Attendance Manager
- Jo Steen, BPS Attendance Manager
- Gemma Lloyd, Attendance Officer
- Mitzi Morton, Attendance Officer
- Helen Allen, Attendance Administrator

### **3.5 Form Tutors**

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 8:50am each day.

### **3.6 School admin/office staff**

School admin/office staff will:

Take calls from parents and students about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Transfer calls from parents and students to the head of year/pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time

Call the school to report their child's absence before [8.35am] on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), or if known, advise when they are expected to return.

Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child, where possible

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Students**

Students are expected to:

Attend every timetabled session on time.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

For students of compulsory school age Whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8:35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:35am and will be kept open until 9:15am

The register for the second session will be taken at 12:00 noon and will be kept open until 12:30pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school Attendance Line/Admin staff (see also section 7).

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 student'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 in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should provide a copy of the Appointment Card/Letter to the Attendance Team/Year Leader, who will then update the registers and sign and return the original documentation, while keeping a copy on file.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, every effort should be made to attend school, before / after the appointment.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Students who arrive late to school after 8:35am will receive a late mark. The students will then complete a break time detention on the same day. Students will be expected to take themselves, at the start of break, to a specified room to complete their detention. Students who do not arrive on time, or arrive late, will complete a lunch time detention on the same day, before going for lunch.

Students who are persistently late will be required to attend on after school detention with their Pastoral Leader.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may make a home visit

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

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 school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels for example, via attendance letters and interim reports

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an unavoidable emergency.

The school 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 6 weeks, before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the Attendance Team. The Head of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head of School, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

All staff are clear about their role in first day response to attendance.

Consistent systems and processes will be established to give an accurate view of the attendance of individuals and groups of students.

We will communicate a clear whole school vision of good attendance and punctuality to the school community.

We will strengthen the links between attendance and safeguarding.

We will create a culture in which students want to attend.

Attendance Displays will be strategically placed around school to promote awareness/raise the profile of attendance

All form classes will have an Attendance Board. Students will be informed of their attendance weekly, and will be responsible for moving their attendance up/down themselves on the attendance charts.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to form teachers/year leaders and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students 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**

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

Key staff will meet weekly to review this cohort

Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Peter Mee. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy



**Appendix 1: attendance codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative

		provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not

		required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



Attendance  
Procedure Flow Cha