



The  
**Birkenhead Park**  
School

# **Attendance Policy**

## **2024-2025**

The Birkenhead Park School

**Last reviewed on:** October 2024

**Next review due by:** October 2025

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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 August 2024](#) 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 Nicola McNamee and can be contacted via 0151 652 1574, or at [mncn@birkenheadparkschool.com](mailto:mncn@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.

### **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 6 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 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am

The register for the KS3 second session will be taken at 1:05pm and will be kept open until 1:35pm.

The register for the KS4 second session will be taken at 12:30pm and will be kept open until 1:00pm.

#### **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 8:35am 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. The school will then make a decision as to whether a home visit is required.

The school **will not authorise** any absence during the first or last five days of a school term, unless supported by medical evidence.

#### **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 an after school pastoral detention on the same day.

Students who have 3 or more lates will be required to attend an after school detention with their Pastoral Leader or with the Senior Leadership Team.

#### 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

### **National Framework for Penalty Notices**

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school’s registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

**There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours.** In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (**not the local authority**) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence

## 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 Nicola McNamee. 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

- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

CODE	MEANING	CRITERIA
B	Attending any other approved Educational Activity	<p>B code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity under arrangements by school or LA in the session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place of the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p>
C	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	<p>Exceptional circumstances</p> <p>No blanket approach</p> <p>School discretion</p> <p>Generally a need or desire for a holiday or tother absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance</p>
C1	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	<p>Performance license issued by LA or Body of Persons Approval issued by LA or</p> <p>Justice of Peace has given license for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose</p>
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	<p>Exceptional circumstances</p> <p>If the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part time</p> <p>temporary</p>
D	Dual registered at another school	<p>The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code</p> <p>Code d may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil</p>

		is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are followed up promptly
E	Suspended or Permanently excluded with no alternative provision made	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.
G	Holiday not granted by school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday. A school cannot grant leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.
I	Illness (not medical appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (Both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.
J1	Leave of absence for interview	Agreement in advance Application by parent child normally lives with In session absence recorded
K	Attending Education Provision arranged by LA	The nature of provision must be recorded. Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed
M	Leave of absence for Medical or Dental Appointment	Agreement in advance Application by parent child normally lives with Minimum time necessary Where pupil is absent at registration
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Where absence is recorded as code N in the attendance register, the correct code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session. Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence

		cannot be established within 5 school days, school must amend the pupil's record to Code O
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity. P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity.	<p>P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place of the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p>
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	<p>There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if (a) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty (b) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil and have failed to discharge that duty or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school and (iii) no suitable arrangements have</p>

		been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home.
R	Religious Observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves)
S	Leave of absence for studying for public examination	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such nature as to require them to travel from place to place To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All school are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.
V	Attending an Educational Visit or trip	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff
W	Attending work experience	W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity under arrangements by school or LA in the

		<p>session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p>
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	<p>For part time attendance</p> <p>Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X</p>
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is not able to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or Local Authority is not available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use

Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session but the school is closed unexpectedly (eg due to adverse weather) the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are : In police detention Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing or Detained under a sentence of detention A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based part of a sentence of detention, referral order or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be: Contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or Prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that	Not a possible attendance

		affects the pupil not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at the school does not , in itself mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause.	
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