



BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL

Attendance

1. Introduction

At Birkenhead School, regular attendance is crucial for the academic success and personal development of our students. This policy outlines our expectations, procedures, and the legal framework surrounding student attendance, ensuring full compliance with the latest statutory changes effective from August 19, 2024.

We aim to link improved attendance with the School culture, creating partnerships with families.

This policy should be read in conjunction with KCSIE 2024 and Child Missing in Education Policy.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is governed by the Education Act 2024 and subsequent regulations, including:

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
 - The Children's Act 2024
 - The Independent School Standards Regulations 2024
 - DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)
 - The Education (Information about individual Students) (England) (Amendment) Regulation 2024.
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3. Attendance Expectations

- All students are expected to attend school **regularly and punctually**.
 - The minimum acceptable attendance rate is **95%**.
 - Absences should be kept to a minimum as they can impact academic performance and well-being.
 - For support on attendance, please contact the Form Tutor in the first instance. Additional support can be gained from the Head of Year. The Senior Attendance champion is Mr Graham Murdoch (gwm@birkenheadschoo.co.uk). Contact details for Form Tutors and Heads of Year are on the Parent Portal.
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4. Types of Absence & Absence Recording

Authorised Absences:

- Illness (medical evidence may be required for absences exceeding three days)
- Medical appointments (must be scheduled outside school hours where possible)
- Religious observances
- Exceptional circumstances (defined below)

Unauthorised Absences:

- Holidays during term time without prior approval
- Arriving late after registration closes without valid reason
- Absences without parental notification

Attendance Coding:

- The school follows DfE attendance codes for accurate record-keeping.
 - Absence data is shared with the Local Authority when required.
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5. Medical Appointments

Students leaving school during the day for medical or dental appointments must **sign out** at the Prep Office or The Lodge and sign back in upon return.

For students in Year 11 and below, permission must be obtained from a member of teaching staff for leaving school during the lunch break.

6. Registration & Punctuality

- **School Day:** School begins at 08:30 and finishes at 15:50.
 - **Morning registration:** 8:30 AM (closes at 9:00 AM)
 - **Afternoon registration:** 1:45 PM (closes at 2:15 PM)
 - Students arriving after registration closes must sign in at The Lodge/Prep Office and will be marked late.
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7. Procedures for Reporting Absence

- Parents/guardians must inform the school **by 9:00 AM** on the first day of a student's absence.
 - Phone-call home from Miss Curtis (School Receptionist)
 - Alert SSMT/HoY
 - Missing Child Procedure followed
 - Absence list circulated once complete
 - A written explanation or medical certificate is required for absences exceeding three days.
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8. Monitoring & Intervention Process

The school follows a structured intervention process to address attendance concerns:

1. **Below 95% Attendance** – Parents are informed, and support is offered.
 2. **Below 90% (Persistent Absenteeism)** – Formal meeting with parents, attendance plan initiated.
 3. **Continued Absenteeism** – Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team for intervention.
 4. **Long Term Absence** – In conjunction with the Local Authority, the School will make every effort to ensure education for students with long-term absence. This includes pastoral intervention, referrals to the Hospital School, liaison with local colleges or other bespoke means. Students unable to come into school, for emotional or medical reasons, are able to access learning from FireFly.
 5. **Legal Action** – If unauthorised absences persist, penalty notices or court action may follow.
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9. Legal Enforcement & Parental Responsibility

- Parents have a **legal duty** to ensure their child attends school regularly.
 - Unauthorised absences may result in a **penalty notice (£60 per parent, increasing to £120 if unpaid)** or further legal action, including court proceedings.
 - In severe cases, parents may face prosecution, fines of up to £2,500, or custodial sentences.
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10. Leave of Absence During Term Time

- Requests for leave must be made **in writing at least two weeks in advance** to the Form Tutor or Head of Year.
 - **Exceptional Circumstances** (as defined by DfE) may include, but not restricted to:
 - Bereavement of a close family member
 - Religious observance
 - Armed forces/military service requirements
 - Significant medical needs
 - Holidays taken during term time will be marked as **unauthorised**, unless exceptional circumstances. Exceptional requests must be made to the Headmaster in writing.
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11. Safeguarding & Attendance

- The School will make every effort to work with families to ensure full attendance, this is led by Mr Murdoch as Senior Attendance Champion. Full attendance is incentivised.
 - Repeated or unexplained absences may indicate **safeguarding concerns**. These will be dealt with by Form Tutor, Head of Year or the wider pastoral team.
 - The school will conduct welfare checks and may involve social services when necessary.
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12. Support for Students & Families

- Working in partnership with families to improve attendance the school provides access to:

- Attendance mentoring
 - Counselling services
 - Early Help referrals for families facing attendance barriers
 - Students with long-term health conditions will receive **remote learning support** where appropriate.
 - The **Attendance Champion** will work with students and families to improve attendance, offering tailored support and intervention.
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13. Staff Training & Responsibilities

- All staff receive training on:
 - Identifying patterns of absence
 - Engaging with families
 - Attendance law and intervention strategies
 - **Responsibilities:**
 - **Students:** Attend regularly and punctually.
 - **Parents/Guardians:** Ensure their child's attendance and communicate absences promptly.
 - **School Staff:** Monitor attendance, maintain records, and provide intervention when needed.
 - **Attendance Champion:** Leads on attendance improvement strategies, works closely with families, and ensures compliance with attendance policies.
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14. Collaboration with Local Authorities

- The school works closely with the **Local Authority Attendance Support Team**.
 - Persistent absence cases are escalated for joint intervention and enforcement action if necessary.
 - When necessary, School will inform a student's youth offending team worker of any unexplained absences.
 - Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.
 - The School must provide specific student information on request to the Secretary of State. Birkenhead School meets this requirement by having an electronic management information system containing the required information and data that can be accessed by the DfE if required.
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15. Review & Compliance

- This policy is reviewed **annually** or in response to legislative changes.
 - The policy is fully compliant with the **DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)**.
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16. Contact Information

For any queries regarding this policy, please contact the **School Office on 0151 652 4014**.

To contact the Senior Attendance Champion, please contact Mr Graham Murdoch on
GWM@birkenheadschool.co.uk

Absences should be reported to seniorabsence@birkenheadschool.co.uk

Approved by: Tom Whitworth

Review Date: September 2025