BIRKENHEAD
SCHOOL

Attendance and Registration Policy

Reviewed by DSL: October 2026

Next review: August 2027

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 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Working Together to Improve School Attendance and Children Missing Education statutory guidance. The School recognises that attendance is both an educational and safeguarding matter and that children who are absent from education may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding concerns.

2. Legal Framework

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

- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- DfE's statutory guidance "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" (August 2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- The Children's Act 2024
- The Independent School Standards Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010

3. Attendance Expectations

- All students are expected to attend school **regularly and punctually**.
- The School expects all students to maintain attendance of at least 95% wherever possible. Regular attendance is fundamental to academic progress, wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Absences should be kept to a minimum as they can impact academic performance and wellbeing.
- For support on attendance, please contact the Form Tutor in the first instance. Additional support can be gained from the Head of Year. The Seniors Attendance Champion is Graham Murdoch, DSL (gwm@birkenheadschool.co.uk). Contact details for Form Tutors and Heads of Year are on the Parent Portal.

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.

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 08:30am and finishes at 3:50pm.
- **Morning registration:** 8:30am (closes at 9:00am)
- **Afternoon registration:** 1:40pm (closes at 2:10pm)
- Students register with their Form Tutor, by default.
- Students arriving after 8:30am will be marked late.
- Students arriving after their Form Tutor has moved to Assembly/Chapel/lessons must sign in at The Lodge.
- Form Tutors will use attendance records to monitor persistent lateness, and they will follow up with students and parents as appropriate. The response will take account of circumstances, distinguishing occasional minor delays from repeated lateness.

Punctuality ensures that students do not miss important information or activities. Late arrival may mean missing key notices, safety instructions such as fire evacuation procedures, or PSHE activities, as well as assemblies or Chapel.

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 Mr Rimmer (School Receptionist)
- Alert SSMT/HoY.
- Missing Child and Children Missing Education (CME) procedures followed where appropriate. Attendance concerns and unexplained absence will be assessed for safeguarding implications.
- Absence list circulated once complete.
- A written explanation or medical certificate is required for absences exceeding three days.

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.

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** or further legal action, including court proceedings.
- In severe cases, parents may face prosecution, fines of up to £2,500, or custodial sentence

10. Leave of Absence During Term Time

- Requests for leave must be made **in writing at least two weeks in advance** to the Head of Seniors.
- **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 Head of Seniors in writing.

11. Safeguarding & Attendance

- The School will make every effort to work with families to ensure full attendance, this is led by Graham 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, DSL or the wider pastoral team.

- The school will conduct welfare checks and may involve social services when necessary.

- The School recognises attendance as a key safeguarding indicator. Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods or on repeated occasions may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines activity, radicalisation or other safeguarding concerns.

- The School recognises emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) as a potential manifestation of mental health need, as outlined in the Mental Health Policy.

- Where attendance concerns suggest safeguarding vulnerability, concerns will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures. Attendance concerns may also be addressed through Early Help and Family Help processes where appropriate.

- Attendance concerns will be logged and monitored via CPOMS by the DSL.

- Particular attention will be given to pupils with a social worker, children in need, children subject to child protection plans, looked after and previously looked after children, and pupils with SEND.

- Elective Home Education: where parents indicate an intention to remove a child from school for EHE, the School will follow statutory guidance, liaise with the Local Authority and consider safeguarding, SEND, welfare and attendance factors before removal from roll.

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 where attendance barriers arise

- 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.

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.

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 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.

15. Review & Compliance

This policy is reviewed **annually** or in response to legislative changes.

The policy has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Working Together to Improve School Attendance and Children Missing Education statutory guidance.

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 Graham Murdoch (DSL):

GWM@birkenheadschool.co.uk

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