

Attendance Policy

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1 Policy Statement

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Birkdale School is committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

The young child, however, is dependent upon the adults in his/her life to get them to school regularly and on time. Therefore, the focus in both EYFS and Pre-Prep programmes is to establish good habits and work with parents to improve attendance. In the Prep Department, we continue to work with parents and start to develop 'self' responsibility in the children. At the Senior School, pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality although we still recognise the important role played by parents and will continue to work with them when appropriate.

We are therefore committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parents.

1.1 Aims of the Policy

- Clear procedures encouraging pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring parents and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring all teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors understand the procedures.
- The commitment to allocate resources to support the policy.
- To recognise and reward pupils who achieve good attendance and punctuality throughout the academic year.

1.2 The Law

The 1996 Education Act requires that:

- All pupils of compulsory school age (5-16) receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- The school must complete attendance registers every day at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who are absent for more than ten days without explanation.
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

The 2008 Education and Skills Act requires that:

English residents who are no longer of compulsory school age but have not yet reached the age of 18 or attained a Level 3 qualification must:

(a) be participating in appropriate full-time education or training
(b) be participating in training in accordance with a contract of apprenticeship,
or (c) both— (i) be in full-time occupation, and (ii) participate in sufficient relevant training or education in each relevant period.

2 Partnership

2.1 What the school expects of our pupils

- That pupils attend regularly, on time and ready to learn.
- That pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g. P.E. kit.
- To report to the office, should they arrive after registration time.
- To tell the Head if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school.

2.2 What the school expects of parents

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and prepared for the day.
- To contact school each day their child is absent for any reason by 8:35 am or on the first day of a known set amount of days' absence.
- To arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times wherever possible, and to obtain an Authorised Absence from the school if unavoidable.
- To arrange holidays out of school time. Further guidance is offered under the section *Requests for term time exceptional leave* later in this policy.
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child from attending school.

2.3 What parents and pupils can expect from the school

- A broad, balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards.
- Efficient and accurate digital recording and monitoring of attendance.
- Contact with parents each day absence is unexplained.
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified.
- Liaison with officers from the Local Authority to assist and support families where needed.
- Regular communication with parents.

3 Procedures

3.1 Registration

Belmayne House

- Registration takes place each morning at 8.45 am and each afternoon at 1.10 pm.
- In the morning pupils are brought into the class by parents. Pupils are collected from the school yard by staff and escorted into their classroom for afternoon registration.
- Class teachers will use the MIS system and enter a present mark (/) in the register for each pupil present and an absent mark (according to the nature of the absence) for any pupil that is absent. Any communication regarding absence will be kept digitally until the end of term and be made available to the Local Authority where appropriate.
- At 9.15 am and 1.20 pm the registers are closed.

Clarke House

- Registration takes place each morning at 8.45 am and each afternoon at 1.45 pm.
- Pupils are collected from the school yard by staff and escorted into their classroom for both morning and afternoon registration.
- Class teachers will use the MIS system and enter a present mark (/) in the register for each pupil present and an absent mark (according to the nature of the absence) for any pupil that is absent. Any communication regarding absence will be kept digitally until the end of term and be made available to the Local Authority where appropriate.
- At 9.15 am and 1.55 pm the registers are closed.

The Senior School

- Registration takes place each morning at 8.35am and each afternoon at 1.50pm.
- Pupils are expected to make their way to registration rooms punctually.
- At 9.05 am and 2.20pm the registers are closed.
- Lesson by lesson registration is also taken at the start of each lesson by the class teacher.
- Class teachers will use the MIS system and enter a present mark (/) in the register for each pupil present and an absent mark (N) for any pupil that is absent. Any explanations of absence which have come directly to the Form Tutor must be sent by email to the Administration Team. All notes will be kept digitally on the MIS and can be made available to the Local Authority where appropriate.

Sixth Form

- Sixth Form pupils are permitted to leave the school site at specified times.
- When leaving the site, pupils must sign-out on the iPads at the Main School Reception or in the Grayson building (Sixth Form Centre).
- Pupils may leave the school site:
 - During lunch break (12.40-1.50pm) and sign back in on their return
 - At 12.40pm if they have signed out and have no further timetabled lessons that day.

If a child is absent, admin staff will make efforts to contact home to ascertain the reason for the absence.

3.2 Responding to lateness

- Pupils at the Prep school should register at the office before going to class. Pupils at senior school presenting late to the office should sign in on the iPad with their reason for being late. Admin Staff will then record this on the MIS system.
- Parents will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late.

Sixth Form

- The Sixth Form leadership team collates weekly punctuality data and shares this with the Sixth Form tutor team.
- Form Tutors speak to the relevant pupils and place in detention those who cannot give an acceptable reason for their lateness.
- Pupils late on 3 occasions twice will be placed in Thursday lunchtime detention.
- Following a further 3 lates they will be placed in Friday detention after school.

3.3 Responding to absence

- Termly attendance review meetings are held with each Head of Section at the Senior school and the Attendance team in the Prep school to discuss pupils with inconsistent attendance.
- Any pupil with attendance below 96% will be identified and discussed.
- Intervention strategies will be agreed for pupils with attendance below 92% and for whom absence cannot be explained or it is evident that intervention is deemed necessary.
- There will be three levels of intervention:
 - Level 1 – Discussion with the pupil (senior school) and monitor attendance when it drops below 96%.
 - Level 2 – Phone call to parents by Heads of Section (Senior School) or Form Tutors (Prep School).
 - Level 3 – Face-to-face meeting with parents to discuss absence concerns and where appropriate initiate an attendance support plan for the pupil concerned.

The Family Intervention Service (FIS) (with parental consent) is a service we can access to support families where there are identified barriers to attendance.

3.4 Children Missing from Education

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the nominated member of school staff to liaise with the Local Authority's Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be

considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures (**See *Missing and Uncollected Pupils Policy***).

3.5 Children in Public Care

The DSL is the co-ordinator who liaises with the Local Authority's Children Looked After team. Pupils will be set up as an Attendance Group on MIS and their individual attendance will be checked each half term.

4 Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Head (Whole School) or Head of Prep

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school.
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues.
- Works with the Deputy Head to implement targets, review statistics and amend the policy as necessary.
- Has responsibility for monitoring the progress of Children Looked After by the Local Authority.
- Has responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of children who are Missing from Education.

4.2 Deputy Head (Pastoral)

- Maintains an overview of attendance and manages the day-to-day implementation of attendance plans and strategies.
- Liaises with the Head to produce and evaluate attendance statistics.

4.3 Head of Section (Senior School)

- Maintain an overview of attendance in their section of the school.
- Attend attendance review meetings.
- Liaise with the admin team, teaching staff, parents and pupils to implement support strategies to improve pupil attendance.

4.4 Class Teachers

- Accurately mark registers when appropriate using codes in line with the new Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations August 2024.
- Attach any notes received to the register folder or send via email for the attention of office staff.
- Report to appropriate staff any issue or problem which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a pupil.
- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school.

4.5 Admin Staff

- Receive, update and maintain accurate class registers in line with the new Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations August 2024.
- Maintain the MIS attendance database and update daily.
- Provide reports from the MIS to governors, Head and other school staff, Local Authority officers as requested.
- Provide relevant information to Local Authority officers making contact with families regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Attend attendance reviews in school.

5 Authorising Absence

Only the Head of Prep may authorise absence in the Prep School. In the Senior School the Head (Whole School) may authorise absence and the Director of Sixth Form may also authorise absence for Sixth Form pupils.

Even when a parent provides an explanation of absence the Head will decide whether to accept the explanation and authorise the absence.

Absence may be authorised if:

- The pupil is too ill to attend school.
- The pupil is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is absent to attend elite level training eg performing arts or sporting activities
- There is a close family bereavement.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence.
- Leave of absence is granted by the Head under exceptional circumstances.

Absence should not be authorised if:

- No explanation is offered by the parent.
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation offered.
- The pupil is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home.
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthday.
- The pupil is absent on exceptional term time leave for longer than agreed by the Head.
- The pupil is absent on holiday.
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut.

6 Requests for term time exceptional leave

Any leave during term time can only be authorised by the Head under *exceptional circumstances*. If parents wish to apply for term time leave under exceptional circumstances the request form on the School Portal must be completed or the Head emailed directly by the parent, clearly stating what the exceptional circumstances are, and given to the Head for consideration no less than 20 days prior to the requested leave begins. The school will inform parents in writing, within 10 days, whether the leave has been authorised (it should be made clear why a decision has been made and the criteria used should be reiterated).

7 Review and Development

7.1 Procedure

This document, together with the effectiveness of its procedures, is reviewed annually by the Policy Committee and Governing Board and as events or legislation change requires.

7.2 Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Missing and Uncollected Pupil Policy

Appendix: Registration and Punctuality Procedures

**Registration is a legal duty and a register is a legal document.
It must be completed effectively.**

- Pupils are registered in form groups at 8.45am at the Prep School and 8.35am at the Senior School every day.
- **Morning Registration must be completed by 8.55am at the Prep School and 9.10am at the Senior School to allow the administrators time to produce the Absence Report and Fire Register at 9.15am which will be printed and located on the desk in the reception area. The Administration Team is responsible for bringing the fire list to the fire assembly point in the event of a fire.**
- Staff will record whether a pupil is present '/' or absent 'N'. They should not enter any other codes unless 100% confident of the reason. Please read the guidance at the foot of the page.
- Pupils signing in after 8.45am/8.35am will be deemed as 'late'. Pupils who are late to school for any reason will sign in with the Administration Team who will amend the register to indicate this. The reason for lateness will be recorded. If a pupil arrives after the registers have closed (30 minutes from the point the registers open), the pupil will receive a 'U' signifying they arrived after the registers had closed and it was an unauthorised absence. The Administration Team will have access to the extended list of government registration codes and will amend the registers using these.
- The parents of pupils who are absent without authorisation, will be contacted by the Administration Team as soon as possible.
- Pupils are also legally registered at the start of Period 7 in the Prep School and Period 6 in the Senior School in the afternoon. On this occasion they may be registered as Teaching Groups rather than Forms.
- **Afternoon Registration must be completed by 1.20pm in the Pre-Prep School, 1.55pm in the Prep School and 2.20pm in the Senior School to allow administrators time to produce the Absence Report and Fire Register.**
- Printed form lists will be maintained by admin staff as a back-up should the system fail and as a fire list.
- Staff should regularly remind pupils that if they are late to school they must sign in at the Main Reception *before doing anything else*.
- Pupils who are persistently late must be challenged. Lateness due to the school bus (not a service bus) being delayed should not be punished.
- Pupils who take part in extra-curricular Music and/or Drama lessons are expected to excuse themselves in person from their academic lesson and sign in for their music lesson using the iPad at Reception (Senior School only). In the Prep school, music teachers take a register of the pupils and hand it into the office.

Persistent lateness by Sixth Form pupils will be closely monitored and addressed by the Sixth Form team.

Lesson-By-Lesson Registration in the Senior School and Sixth Form:

- In addition to Morning and Afternoon registration, class teachers will take an attendance register at the start of every lesson.
- Lesson by lesson registration enables the school to monitor pupil attendance throughout the school day.
- If a pupil is absent the class teacher will record an 'N' in the register.
- If the whereabouts of a pupil is not known the class teacher will email the Missing Pupil email address to raise the alarm (See Missing and Uncollected Pupil Policy).
- Where there are any unauthorised discrepancies between the morning and afternoon registers the person acting as the school secretary will immediately establish whether or not the pupil is on the site; see the procedure for 'Missing Pupils'. Where appropriate the parents of pupils who are absent without authorisation, will be contacted by the Administration Team
- Records of Attendance must be stored by law for 6 years.

Absences

- It is essential that absence, whether unauthorised or authorised, is entered onto the system accurately. This information will be used in the electronic reporting process.
- An authorised absence is when a pupil does not attend school with permission. Example: any activity where the Head has approved an absence via letter, email or through the use of the Absence Request Form which can be found on the School Portal.
- An unauthorised absence is when a pupil does not attend school without permission. Example: visiting a university without permission or taking a day off because of illness without notifying school.
- An unauthorised absence can become authorised. Example: Where a pupil does not come to school because s/he is ill they will be marked as absent 'O' (unauthorised). If the parent is in contact with the school to explain the reason for the absence either by phone or through a note given to form teachers on the following day, then the absence will become an authorised absence, 'I'.
- Absence within the MIS must be accurately entered because the registration module will link to the report module. Absence and Late data will automatically be entered onto reports. Days out on school trips and fixtures will not be included in this data.
- All members of the administration team are able to update the registers if contacted by parents, at the point of notification. They need not direct each notification to the person acting as school secretary who may be unavailable
- Pupils granted a 'Leave of Absence' will be added to registers by the person acting as the School Secretary before the event to prepare the registers for Form Tutors. Where a pupil is present despite asking for a Leave of Absence the register will be amended by the person completing the register.