

# Attendance Policy

Birchwood Community High School

Policy owner (Name):	Mrs A Crompton
Policy owner (Job Title):	Pastoral Manager
Date of review:	September 2023
Date of next review:	September 2025

## Rationale

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential.

Birchwood Community High School is committed to providing all students with the best possible start in life and will work hard to ensure that all students attend school regularly. We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome, allowing individuals to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

### The aims of this policy are:

- To safeguard all children
- To promote good attendance and punctuality for all students with all stakeholders
- To enable all students to have full access to the curriculum through regular attendance
- To intervene and challenge all students who require additional support to achieve good attendance
- To meet targets set by the Governing Body regarding attendance and to drive school attendance beyond national averages.

### We are committed to tackling poor attendance because:

- Irregular attendance seriously disrupts learning, leading to underachievement and low attainment
- Students with poor attendance will have gaps in their learning
- Poor attendance will hinder the students' ability to develop socially
- We want to make sure students are safe
- We want to increase students' opportunities.

At Birchwood Community High School, we value all students; we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

### The Law:

- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance or otherwise.

- A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
  - Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and, where necessary, use legal enforcement.
  - The Education (student registration) (England) Regulations 2006, requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- Attendance Codes and meaning can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Parental responsibilities:**

- Parents have a legal obligation to educate their children and can be prosecuted if they do not meet this obligation
- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child arrives to school promptly each day
- Parents/Carers must contact the school on the first day of absence if the school has not previously been informed and maintain daily contact should the absence continue
- Parents must avoid taking holidays in school time or, if they cannot do so, must apply to the Headteacher for permission in advance.

### **The school requests that parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school, taking every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school and acknowledging the importance of children receiving consistent messages from both school and home.

### **School responsibilities:**

- The school will enable all students to achieve their full potential and expect regular attendance, to best prepare them for life after school
- The school will inform parents in cases of known truancy
- The school will contact parents/carers through Classcharts on the first day of absence when no initial contact is received
- In the case of absence due to prolonged illness the school will provide work in liaison with parents/carers
- When the number or frequency of absences gives cause for concern the appropriate intervention will take place between school, parents and the Local Authority
- Persistent lateness will be challenged and sanctioned and parents will be contacted regarding the concerns.

### **School will:**

- Ensure that attendance and punctuality are a priority for staff, children, parents and governors
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and parents/carers.

- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Provide support, advice and guidance for children and parents
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data, interpret the data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Implement an effective system of rewards and sanctions
- Promote positive relationships between school and home
- Promote effective partnerships with other relevant agencies
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site, are implemented.

### **The school requests that students will:**

- Attend school every day
- Arrive in school and to Form on time
- Remain in class unless given permission to leave
- Remain in school unless given permission to leave
- Catch up with missing work following absence.

### **Monitoring students' attendance:**

- When a student is absent, it is expected that the parents/carer will contact the school through Classcharts. Where this is not the case, the school will contact parents/carers to establish the reason for absence and that the child is safe.
- If school staff cannot contact home and the school is unsure whether the child is safe, a home visit for specifically identified students may be arranged.
- Should absence continue and patterns emerge, then the Pastoral Manager will work with the Pastoral Team to develop a strategy to improve attendance for specific students.
- If truancy is identified, parents/carers will be notified via a phone call
- If there are punctuality concerns, parents/carers will be contacted and intervention will take place.

### **Punctuality**

It is important that students arrive promptly each day, they must be in their Form rooms by 08:40 each day. Students arriving after this time will be registered late. Students who arrive late will receive a sanction on the same day. We ask for the parents/carers support to ensure that this is not a regular occurrence.

### **Students Leaving Site**

If a student has to leave the site for any reason, school should be provided with a letter signed and dated, receive a phone call or be notified through Classcharts. The information should indicate the reason for leaving the school site, the time that the student should leave and information regarding the child's return. All students leaving the school site must sign out at the school office.

## **School Support systems**

Birchwood Community High School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a student's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school staff aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school. This will help the school to identify any additional support that may be required.

Birchwood Community High School will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies may include:

- Form Tutor intervention
- Assistant Year Team Lead Intervention
- Year Team Leader Intervention
- Pastoral Team support and intervention
- Attendance Officer strategies for success
- Discussion with parents and students
- Referrals to support agencies
- Reintegration support packages
- Reward systems
- Liaison with the Local Authority and external agencies
- Other strategies deemed appropriate to motivate and engage young people and families.

## **Local Authority support**

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Birchwood Community High school and Warrington LA attendance team will consider the use of legal sanctions. The LA will consider prosecuting such families under the Education Act (1996). As a parent/carer you are legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly and is punctual. If you fail to ensure this, you are committing an offence under the Education Act (1996) which may lead to a fine of up to £2500 and/or a prison sentence.

### **Linked Policies:**

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

### **Useful Links:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

## APPENDIX 1

### Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present AM	Present
\	Present PM	Present
B	Educated off site	Approved Educational Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered	Approved Educational Activity
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence
F	Extended family holiday	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Authorised Absence
L	Late (before registers close)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised Absence
P	Sporting activity	Authorised Absence
R	Religious observation	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (registers have closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non compulsory school age	Attendance not required
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required
-	All should attend/no mark provided	No Mark
#	School closed to students and staff	Attendance not required

## Appendix 2 Attendance Intervention

PHASED APPROACH TO ATTENDANCE INTERVENTIONS	
<b>100% - 96%</b>	<p><b>Excellent attendance</b></p> <p>Recognition and Praise – Form Tutor, Assistant Year Team Leader, Year Team Leader. Contact home – e-praise postcards</p>
<p><b>95% - 93%</b></p> <p>Triggers: Broken weeks Truancy Drop in attendance Patterns of absence Punctuality concern</p>	<p><b>Phase one intervention:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Year Team Leader to speak to student re any barriers to regular attendance.</li> <li>• Discussed in fortnightly meeting between Pastoral Manager (AC) &amp; YTL</li> <li>• YTL to telephone home re any barriers to regular attendance</li> <li>• Students who are considered vulnerable will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there is any unexplained absence.</li> </ul>
<p><b>93% -90%</b></p> <p>Triggers: Broken weeks Truancy No improvement Patterns of absence Punctuality concern</p>	<p><b>Phase Two intervention:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Help considered.</li> <li>• Attendance reviewed Fortnightly by Pastoral Manager &amp; YTL</li> <li>• Initial concern letter sent to parent/carer with attached information regarding the link between attendance and academic attainment.</li> <li>• Home visit completed by Attendance Officer (RP)</li> <li>• Meeting with YTL, barriers discussed, action plan agreed, consequences of further absence discussed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Less than 90%</b></p> <p>Persistent Absence</p>	<p><b>Phase Three intervention:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Help assessment offered to parents/carers</li> <li>• Parents invited into a meeting with Pastoral Manager (AC) and LA Attendance Officer - action plan agreed – reviewed fortnightly</li> <li>• Persistent Absence letter sent every half term and attendance reviewed fortnightly.</li> <li>• Parents/carers of students whose attendance is below 90% will receive a persistent absence letter each half term.</li> </ul>
<p><b>No sustained improvement</b></p>	<p><b>Phase Four Intervention:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further absence/no sustained improvement in attendance Fast Track Prosecution process instigated.</li> </ul>

If parents/carers do not communicate a reason for their child's absence and school staff cannot contact them, welfare checks will be carried out initially by school staff. However, if a child remains absent for a period of time and there is no contact, this would raise safeguarding concerns and school staff may consider requesting a welfare check by Cheshire Police.

## Appendix 3 - Punctuality to School

Registration period begins at 8.40am and 1.55pm. Any student arriving after 8.40am will be deemed to be late and the register marked **L**. To safeguard all children, the school gates will close promptly at 8.40am and reopen again at 3.10pm. Students will receive their AM legal mark in period one each day and registers will close 30 minutes after this time. Any student arriving after this time will be marked **U** (an unauthorised absence).

### **Our message:**

*Punctuality to school is important. If we are punctual, it means that we have pride in ourselves, appreciation for the teachers that tirelessly plan our learning and it is business like, preparing for the future. So the expectation is that everyone will be ready to learn and in their Form rooms 8.40am. Birchwood is a busy place in the morning. Because of this everyone needs to set off early and be prepared for the day ahead. Our expectation is that everyone will be on time every day.*

Children who are late for the legal register in the morning will receive a 30-minute detention on the same day.

### Procedures

	<b>SLT, Attendance Officer and Office Staff</b>	<b>Form Teachers</b>
8.30am	SLT will meet and greet Children at the gates	On route to Form
8.40am	After the gates have closed at 8.40am, Attendance Officer (RP) will register anybody who arrives through main school reception	Form Tutors meet and greet all Children for the session and mark the register at 8.40am
8.40am	All students arriving after 8:40 are late and will receive a 30 minute after school detention from the Attendance Officer, if they arrive through the main school reception.	Any Student who arrives after 8.40am will receive a 30 minute after school detention from their Form Tutor, if they have not arrived through the main school reception. Primarily, this is the consequence for those students who came into school before the gates were closed but were slow getting to their Form room.
8:40am – 9.30am	Attendance Officer will register any students who arrive through the main school reception	
9.30 onwards	Office staff will register any students who arrive after period 1 using code “U” which is an unauthorised absence.	





## Appendix 4 – Legal Framework for School Attendance

Under the direction of the Education Act, parents or carers of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their child receives full time education, whether by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Parents or carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised.

### Criteria for consideration for fast track prosecution

Pupil's attendance should be less than 90% attendance, the majority of absence should be **unauthorised**.

### Interventions should include:

- Letters
- Meetings in school with pupil and parent
- School action plan to include details of what support has been offered (e.g. reintegration plan, reduced timetable etc.)
- Evidence that parents have been informed of the absences and that these will not be authorised without medical evidence (e.g. appointment card from GP or medical certificate.)

Once the above has been actioned and no improvement in attendance has been achieved, the case can be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Team for consideration for instigation of fast track prosecution.

The Attendance Team Panel will meet to discuss the case. An Attendance Officer will then be allocated if sufficient evidence has been obtained or advice will be given regarding further interventions from school. You will be informed within 10 school days of the decision.

The 12-week fast track prosecution process will then begin. Failure to achieve an improvement in attendance during this period will result in legal action being taken. **Please note that the school's evidence will form part of this statement so needs to be accurate and should include at least four separate interventions.**

## Appendix 5 - Holidays in Term time

In line with Government directions, term time holidays and extended leave are not allowed and **will not be authorised** as stated in the Education (Learner Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

The school will only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances that are not related to holidays.

### Procedures

1. Written requests for absence in school time should be submitted in writing to the Pastoral Manager, Amanda Crompton

[Acrompton@birchwoodhigh.org](mailto:Acrompton@birchwoodhigh.org)

**Appendix 6 – Procedures for registering and if a child is unaccounted for or absconds:**

<p><b>Procedures for registering</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Classcharts register is completed in the first 10 minutes of the lesson.</li> <li>2. Marked with a \ for present or N if absent and there is no pre-existing absence mark input by the Attendance Team</li> <li>3. Students unaccounted for, those who are marked in previously or with anomalous marks are flagged (by radio, phone or email) to the Attendance Officer and the On Call Team</li> </ol>
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<p><b>On site or off site (sports hall) Student is missing or unaccounted for or who Absconds</b></p>	<p>If a student goes missing or is unaccounted for on the way to, from or during the lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As far as is possible the teacher makes reasonable enquires without compromising the safety of the other students in the lesson</li> <li>• The member of staff contacts On Call staff to notify them of the anomaly</li> <li>• The On Call Team/Polaris Team will organise a building sweep and contact the parents of the child. This will include contacting the Headteacher or their deputy and the emergency services as required</li> <li>• Feedback is provided to the class teacher if possible</li> </ul>
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**Appendix 7 – Procedures for escorting children who are being educated at the Sports hall**

<p><b>Off site: Movement to and from off- site facilities</b></p>	<p>If a student is late for school or the lesson for whatever reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They should always be escorted to the sportshall by a member of staff</li> <li>• In the unlikely event that there is not an adult available to escort, then the student will be supervised on site. This may mean in another PE lesson, with a senior member of staff or in Polaris</li> </ul>
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