



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL



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University of Birmingham School

Attendance Policy

February 2025

University of Birmingham School Attendance Policy

Review Frequency	Annually	Review date	February 2025
Governing Committee Responsible	Pastoral Committee	Next Due	March 2026
Governor Approval (date)	26 February 2025	Website	Y
Staff Responsible	C Townsend		

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At University of Birmingham School, we refer to Pupils (who are in Years 7-11 and aged 11-16) and Students (who are in Years 12/13 and aged 17-18)	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 University of Birmingham School recognises the high correlation between achievement and attendance therefore, in order to achieve high levels of attendance there is a clearly defined process communicated to all stakeholders.
- 1.2 School attendance is subject to various Education legislation and this School Attendance Policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by The Department for Education.
- 1.3 We are keen that everyone aims for 100% attendance at School.
- 1.4 We would hope that parents and carers will help by:
 - a) not letting their child(ren) take time off School for minor ailments, seeking important advice and guidance from the NHS on 'is my child too ill for school?' when making decisions about sending in, or keeping their child off school. NHS guidance can be found here:
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>
 - b) arranging appointments and outings after School hours, or as late as possible in the afternoon, at weekends or during School holidays;
 - c) not taking holidays during term time.
- 1.5 The importance of good attendance is an integral part of our Home-School agreement.
- 1.6 If we have a concern regarding a pupil/student's attendance we will notify parents and carers by email, telephone or letter.
- 1.7 There are clear procedures for the reporting of absence (see below) and this policy is available as a paper copy on request from the School Website.
- 1.8 The taking of holidays during the School terms is strongly discouraged.
- 1.9 The School's Management Information System (Arbor) system is used to monitor attendance at registration and lessons.
- 1.10 Attendance figures are reported termly to governors and reviewed at Senior Leadership level at least every half term.
- 1.11 Attendance figures are monitored on a regular basis by the Senior Leadership Team, Year Leaders and the Attendance Officer.
- 1.12 We will work co-operatively with external agencies to deal with problems of irregular attendance.
- 1.13 We will keep accurate records of all suspensions and exclusions and, in accordance with statutory guidance, report them to the Governing Body and the Local Authority.
- 1.14 We take appropriate action to reduce the need to suspend or exclude pupils from our School.
- 1.15 We continue to monitor the attendance of Children in Care, those from ethnic minorities, Pupil Premium Students, vulnerable students and those students with an Education and Health Care Plan or SEND status.
- 1.16 We will review our attendance figures and set attendance targets, at least annually.
- 1.17 These will reflect that, as a School, we seek to achieve attendance figures above both national and West Midlands averages.

2 School Attendance

2.1 In order to achieve high levels of attendance and promote learning, the Pastoral Team adhere to the following lines of action:

Procedures

- a) The Senior Leadership Team will monitor attendance in conjunction with the Year Leaders, Pastoral Managers and our Attendance Officer.
- b) Year Leaders will meet with their Senior Leadership Team Link line manager to discuss any pupil or student who is of concern due to a poor attendance record. Year Leaders will also meet with the Attendance Officer to ensure regular lines of communication and discussion when an attendance concern is first identified.
- c) Prolonged absence without medical support will be referred to ELIT at Birmingham City Council.
- d) The Attendance Officer will investigate all cases where a student or pupil's attendance falls below 95% in any one half-term (this information is available from the computerised attendance information).
- e) The attendance of any student classed as a **Persistent Absentee** (attendance below 90%) is monitored every half term and strategies implemented to try and support the student to improve their attendance.
- f) In accordance with updated guidance from the Department for Education, all holidays in term time (now called leave of absence in exceptional circumstances or LOA) must be agreed by the Principal before the absence is taken.
- g) Parents/carers do not have a right to take their children out of school during term time and may be fined if they do so without the school's authorisation.
- h) Penalty notices, when issued, informs the parents/carers to pay a fine of £80 (if paid within 21 days) or £160 if paid within 28 days (from September 2024).
- i) Teachers must mark the register accurately at the start of the first session of the day and at the start of the first session in the afternoon.
- j) If a concern is raised regarding possible truancy from lessons or School, School protocols are enacted and contact is made home to inform the family. Sanctions may be issued, in line with the School behaviour policy.
- k) All staff promote high standards of punctuality and attendance in all year groups by being a good role model. Both attendance and punctuality are part of our School language and we speak regularly with pupils and students about the importance of being present and being on time.
- l) Parents and carers will receive communication regarding attendance through letters, emails, at consultation evenings if requested and via the School's Reporting System.
- m) The School operates Birmingham City Council's 'Support First' to support good attendance. This is coordinated and actioned by our Attendance Officer, with monitoring and supervision from the designated Attendance Leader who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

3 Student or Pupil (Sickness) Absence Reporting Procedures

- 3.1 Any pupil or student who is absent from School at the morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised, unexplained, or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of School).
- 3.2 Only the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team with the delegated responsibility to act on their behalf can authorise absence.
- 3.3 If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence **must** be recorded in the first instance as unexplained.
- 3.4 If the absence is still unexplained after a 2 week period, this will be changed to unauthorised.

4 Lateness

- 4.1 Pupils and students are registered in the morning during their first session. For pupils, this takes place in their first session with a member of staff. For sixth-form pupils, this can be through 'tapping in' via our electronic system, InVentry.
- 4.2 Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked late unless there is an acceptable explanation (e.g. transport problems that can be verified by parent/carer).
- 4.3 A sanction will be issued for lateness to School, in line with our School Behaviour Policy. This may result in the pupil receiving a detention at the end of the same day.
- 4.4 In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.
- 4.5 Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Year Leader or the Pastoral Manager will be arranged. Where necessary, pupils will be placed on a fixed-term punctuality report to support improved punctuality to School.
- 4.7 The afternoon registration mark will be taken from the first session in the afternoon for pupils and students, typically from time.
- 4.8 Pupils arriving after the start of School but within the first 15 minutes of lessons starting will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

5 First Day Absence

- 5.1 If a child is absent, parents and carers should call the School on the first day, stating the reason for the absence.
- 5.2 Where necessary, a further note or email should then be sent into School, for the attention of our Attendance Officer, on the day the child returns to explain the absence.
- 5.3 If no contact is made by parents and carers explaining the absence on the first day, the School will try to telephone or send an email/text to secure an explanation.
- 5.4 If attendance falls below 95% over a monitored period, the Attendance Officer will initiate the Support First support process, including making contact via email or phone and discussing potential barriers to improved attendance. Where necessary, a support plan will be put in place to support improved

attendance to School.

- 5.5 If attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officer, in liaison with the Senior Leadership Team, will continue to follow the Support First process, including the set-up of an Informal Attendance Meeting, in line with Support First processes.
- 5.6 Where attendance still does not improve, the Attendance Officer will invite parent/carer(s) into School for a Formal Attendance Meeting, and refer to the Education Welfare Team at the Local Authority for additional support. Where necessary, the use of an Attendance Contract will be put in place to improve attendance.
- 5.7 Where attendance still does not improve, the Attendance Officer will refer to ELIT and outline the legal requirements to parent/carer(s). A review of the Support Plan will take place and a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued.
- 5.8 Where attendance does not improve after 'Notice to Improve', Penalty Notices/Legal Proceedings to be issued to parent/carer(s).

6 Persistent Absence

- 6.1 This may be either authorised or unauthorised persistent absence from School.
- 6.2 We recognise that a child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the School environment.
- 6.3 Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for (3 days) will be discussed between the Attendance Officer and relevant Year Leader/ Pupil Pastoral Manager. The School will record details of the action that they have taken following this discussion.

7 Frequent Absence

- 7.1 It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.
- 7.2 In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absence, the School will try to resolve the problem with the parent(s) or carer(s).
- 7.3 If this is unsuccessful the School may refer to the School Health Adviser / School Nurse etc, if the problem appears to be a medical one.
- 7.4 The School may refer to other external agencies where this may be suitable in terms of support to improve attendance e.g. Malachi Family Support.

8 A Welcome Back

- 8.1 It is important that on return from an absence, all pupils and students are made to feel welcome back in School. This happens through form tutors, teaching staff and support staff within the School community.
- 8.2 This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work where possible and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils and students in their absence, where possible.

9 Absence Notes

- 9.1 Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year and should be passed directly to the Attendance Officer for noting and filing.
- 9.2 If there are attendance concerns that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. This will be overseen by the Attendance Officer, in liaison with the Senior Leadership Team.

10 Promoting Attendance

- 10.1 The School will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents and carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education and attend School every day that they are able to.
- 10.2 The Home- School agreement is used in this way at the start of a pupil's education at University of Birmingham School, and referred to at key points throughout each academic year.

11 Holidays during Term Time

- 11.1 Term time holidays and extended leave are not allowed and will not be authorised as stated in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.
- 11.2 The School will only consider granting leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances** that are not related to holidays. A holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance. You can be fined or face legal action for taking your child on holiday during term time.
- 11.3 Parents/carers must write directly to the Principal for permission to take their child out of School during term time, outlining the exceptional circumstances (at least **6 weeks** before an absence).
- 11.4 The 6 week time period is necessary in order for the School to give due consideration to the request.
- 11.5 If the request is denied, the School will inform the parent or carer of the reason by letter or email.
- 11.6 If the parent(s) or carer(s) choose to continue with the planned absence holiday, it will be taken as an unauthorised absence and could result in a penalty notice being issued.
- 11.7 In the rare circumstance when the Principal is satisfied that there are genuine reasons for an absence, they will determine the number of days a child can be away from School if the leave is granted.

12 Penalty Notices

12.1 Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the local authority (including on behalf of free Schools) and other designated bodies to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from School.

12.2 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004 and have recently been amended on the 19 August 2024. A Penalty Notice could be issued in the following circumstances:

If a minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school week, for:

- Overt Truancy;
- Parentally-condoned absences;
- Holidays taken in term-time; and
- Persistent late arrival at School (after the Register has closed).

12.3 The National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence includes:

- Fines: The fine for a first offense is £160 if paid within 28 days, or £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Number of fines: A parent can receive a maximum of two fines for the same child within a three-year period.
- Threshold: A penalty notice will be considered if a child has missed 10 sessions (usually five school days) within a 10-week period.
- Repeated offenses: A second offense within three years will be charged at the higher rate of £160.
- Prosecution: If a parent fails to pay a penalty notice, they may be prosecuted in court. There is no right of appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If this is not paid, the local authority can proceed to prosecution or withdraw the notice.

13 Attendance Targets

13.1 The School will set attendance targets each year.

13.2 A system for analysing performance towards the targets is undertaken each year, and reviewed as part of the School-wide performance development review that takes place annually.

13.3 For 2024-25, *our School's realistic attendance target is 2% above national average.*

14 The Registration System and Absence Codes

The School uses the Arbor computerised system for keeping the School attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information as of September 2024:

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved educational activity
K	LA arranged provision at a place other than a school	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Approved educational activity
C	Absent with leave (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Absent due to participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Authorised absence
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence

D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
Q	Lack of transport or boarding access arrangements arranged by LA	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Transport normally provided by LA or school not available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel due to local, national or international emergency	Not counted in possible attendances
Y3	School partially closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	Travel or attendance contrary to public health guidance or law on transmission of disease	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils (planned closure)	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY

Present
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Not counted in possible attendances

Policy reviewed February 2025

Attendance Leader on SLT - Mr J Bennett

Attendance Officer - Ms S McKenzie