



Birchwood High School

your dreams, your future, our challenge

Birchwood High School Attendance Plan

Our Attendance Aim

- The school's attendance goal is **96% or above**, in line with local authority guidelines.
- This aim reflects our belief that regular attendance provides students with the best foundation for success.

To help all students meet this target, the school implements proactive and supportive measures:

1. Building relationships with families and students, fostering open communication and trust.
2. Creating a safe, supportive, and engaging environment to make school a place students enjoy attending.
3. Raising awareness about the importance of good attendance and punctuality through school communications and events.
4. Monitoring attendance closely and recording reasons for absences promptly to address concerns early.

Step 1: If Attendance Drops to 93%

- Families receive an **Attendance Awareness Communication**. This acts to reemphasise the importance of attendance and the school's expectations and highlights to parents that their child's attendance is below where the school would like it to be.
- It is an early outreach to offer support to identify and address any challenges that may be affecting attendance.

If Attendance Improves

- No further action is required.
- The student's attendance will continue to be monitored as part of the school's regular procedures.

Step 2: If Attendance Drops to 91%

- Families are invited to an **Attendance Support Meeting** to collaboratively explore specific barriers to attendance, ensuring an individualised approach to improvement.

If Attendance Improves

- No further action is required.
- The student's attendance will continue to be monitored as part of the school's regular procedures.

Principal, Mr Sam Griffin

Parsonage Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 5BD

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Step 3: If Attendance Drops Below 90%

- Students are classified as **Persistent Absentees** under government guidelines (missing 10% or more schooling).
- An **Attendance Resolution Meeting** is held with families, focusing on:
 1. Creating a customised Assess/Plan/Do/Review plan tailored to the child's needs.
 2. Evaluating the potential need for fines and legal action on a case-by-case basis.

Step 4: If Attendance Drops Below 50%

- Students are classified as **Severe Persistent Absentees** under government guidelines (missing 50% or more schooling).
- An **Attendance Resolution Meeting** is held with families, focusing on:
 1. Coordinating interventions with external agencies and referral to the local authority to address complex issues if appropriate.
 2. Continuation of Assess/Plan/Do/Review plan tailored to the child's needs.
 3. Evaluating the potential need for fines and legal action on a case-by-case basis.

We are bound by the local authority to notify any cases where there are 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence and 15 consecutive days of medical absence.

Non communication or Unauthorised Absence

If the school does not receive notification of your child's absence:

- Day 1: Truancy call. A text message will be sent to parents/carers which requires a response. This may well be followed up by a phone call by the school later in the day.
- Day 2: The school will contact you by phone to confirm the reason for absence and discuss a timeline for your child's return to school.
- Day 3: If no contact has been made, the school will escalate by reaching out via phone and email.
- Day 4: If there is still no response, the school will conduct a welfare check and arrange an Attendance Resolution Meeting to address the absence and any underlying issues.

Definitions of Absence

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are those which the school considers reasonable and unavoidable. These include:

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- Illness: Time away from school due to a genuine health issue.
- Medical appointments: Where appointments could not reasonably be scheduled outside of school hours.
- Exceptional circumstances: These must be pre-approved by the Principal.

We understand that deciding whether to keep your child off school due to illness can be challenging. The government provides health protection guidelines on managing specific infectious diseases, available on GOV.UK. These outline when children should or should not attend school.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those the school does not consider valid reasons for missing school, including:

- Non-infectious illnesses or injuries that do not prevent learning.
- Absences without explanation.
- Arriving at school after morning registration has closed.
- Day trips or family birthdays.
- Looking after siblings or accompanying them or parents to appointments.
- Term-time holidays not pre-approved by the Principal.

Term-Time Holidays

There is no legal entitlement for students to take time off for holidays during the school term.

- Applications for term-time absences must be made in writing to the Principal, who will review requests on a case-by-case basis.
- Requests should explain why the absence cannot be taken during school holidays.
- The request form can be found on our website.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important aspect of maintaining regular attendance:

- Morning registrations is at 8:40am and students arriving after this time will be marked late.
- Form time finishes at 9:00am and registers close at 9:30am.
- Students who arrive significantly late (after registration close) without an explanation will be marked as absent for the session, which counts as an unauthorised absence.
- Persistent lateness will prompt discussions with families to identify and address any barriers to timely attendance.

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