



Birchwood High School

Student Attendance Policy

1 Mission Statement

Birchwood High School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the response of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

2 School Procedures

Any student who is absent from school in the morning or afternoon registration (Period 5) must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

(a) Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45 am. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. 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. The afternoon registration marks takes place between 1400 and 1410 during Period 5.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

(b) First Day Absence

On the first day of a student's absence the parent or carer is expected to contact the school on the school absence line and leave a message. This information is transferred to the registers on a daily basis. If a message is not received then Truancy Call is triggered. Truancy Call continues to phone every registered contact number on the Management Information System SIMS until a message is received.

If the form tutor/Attendance Officer has not received communication from a student's parent or carer about an absence by the third day, he or she will ask the office to contact the student's parent or carer.

For specific students where there are attendance and/or safeguarding concerns, the school operates a proactive phone call system where parents are contacted on the morning of the absence. The School's Attendance Officer monitors these calls and takes action including home visits where appropriate.

(c) Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the form tutor & Attendance Officer to monitor and respond to any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/ carer. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer to the School Nurse Attendance Team at Herts County Council. If the problem appears to be a medical one then a referral may be made to Education Support for Medical Absence (ESMA). In other cases the school may seek advice from the County Attendance Team.

(d) A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome by their tutors and teachers. Daily emails of students who are absent are sent to all staff with the tagline No Absence Left Unnoticed (NALU). This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students.

(e) Absence Notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the student, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

(f) Promoting Attendance

The school will use assemblies and tutorial time to promote the importance of high attendance. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

(g) Holidays During Term Time

Holidays during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and only by the Principal. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a student's potential achievement.

(h) Penalty Notices

In order to support our students to improve their attendance we have adopted Hertfordshire County Council's 'letter system' as outlined below.

- If a student's attendance falls to 96% a notification letter will be sent by our Attendance Officer. Attendance will then be monitored.
- If attendance drops to 93% another letter will be sent, stating that further absences will not be authorised without evidence.
- If absences continue they will be unauthorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice warning letter will be sent.
- If a student has 15 or more unauthorised absences in any two consecutive terms, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority.

At Birchwood High School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a student has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and / or previous term, the Principal may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full the Local Authority may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.

(i) Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward students who have good or improving attendance:

- Certificates are given at the end of each term and at the end of the year to students with 100% attendance and to those with the most improved attendance.
- Each term the names of 100% attenders from each year group are entered into a draw in an assembly and one winner from each year receives a prize.
- Fortnightly tutor group prizes are awarded to tutor groups with the highest collective attendance.

(j) Attendance Targets

The school's attendance targets are agreed and set each year in collaboration with the Herts Attendance Team and based on census data and comparison with national figures. These figures are met by taking into account the number of students who receive free school meals and then selecting the upper quartile for that banding. Performance towards the targets will be analysed by a senior school leader.

3 The Registration System

The School uses electronic registration for keeping the school attendance records. The national codes are used to record attendance information.

Registers, by law, must be kept for at least three years.

Computer registers are backed up daily and are kept for three years

Register Security

The registers are taken electronically using SIMS in each form room or class room. If a paper register has to be taken (for example during a cover lesson) it is delivered to the administration office by a student. The details from these registers are entered manually onto the system daily.

Appendix 1 Deletion from Roll

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 came into force on 1 September 2016. Regulation 5 extends the duty of schools to notify the local authority when a student is removed from roll to **all** instances of removal from roll (with the exception of the usual transfers between phases – infant to junior, primary to secondary and at the end of compulsory education, unless requested to do so by their local authority). This is to ensure that no student becomes a child missing from education (CME).

The 2016 amendment also places a duty on schools and local authorities to work collaboratively in **'jointly making reasonable enquiries'** as to the whereabouts of a student before a student is removed from roll.

Information schools must provide to the local authority:

Regulation 12(6) states:

'Where the name of a student is to be deleted from the admission register, the proprietor must make a return to the local authority for that student as soon as the ground for their deletion under regulation 8 is met in relation to that student, and in any event no later than the time at which the student's name is deleted from the register.

Regulation 12(7) details the information schools must include in the return, namely:

- (a) the full name of the student;
- (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the student normally resides;
- (c) at least one telephone number at which any parent with whom the student normally resides can be contacted in an emergency;
- (d) the particulars specified pursuant to regulation 5(1)(ca) if applicable;* (*see below*)
- (e) the particulars specified pursuant to regulation 5(1)(g) if applicable;** (*see below*)
- (f) **the ground under regulation 8 upon which their name is to be deleted from the admission register**

*5(1)(ca) – 'where a parent of the student notifies the proprietor of the school or a person authorised by the proprietor of the school that the student will normally reside with a parent at a specified other address in the future, whether in addition to or instead of the address at which the student currently normally resides –

- (i) the full name of the parent with whom the student will newly normally reside,
- (ii) the specified other address, and

(iii) the date from which it is expected the child will normally reside there, where it is reasonably practicable for the proprietor to obtain that information'

**5(1)(g) – 'where a parent of the student notifies the proprietor or a person authorised by the proprietor of the school that the student –

- (i) is also registered at another school; or
- (ii) will be attending a specified other school in the future,

the name of that other school and the first date on which the student attended or is due to attend that school, where it is reasonably practicable for the proprietor to obtain that information' .

A student of compulsory school age should have his/her name deleted from the admissions register when:

8a. A new school is named on a School Attendance Order, or the Order is revoked

If a student is the subject of a School Attendance Order their name may only be removed from roll if another school is substituted by the local education authority for that named in the order, or the order is revoked because other education arrangements are in place

- The student should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days

8b. Student is registered at another school

If a parent has notified the academy that the student will be transferring to a new school/academy and has provided the name and address:

- The academy should check with the new school/academy that the student is registered with them/has an expected start date.
- The student should be removed from roll at the end of their expected final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days

8c. Student is registered at more than one school

If a student is registered at more than one school, has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which the student is registered has given consent to the deletion:

- The academy should confirm the student is now registered at the other school
- The student should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days

(Exceptions to this requirement are if the student has died, or has been permanently excluded.)

8d. Elective Home Education

If the academy receives written notification from a parent of their intention to Electively Home Educate, the student's name must be removed from roll.

Academies should not encourage parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding exclusion or because the student has a poor attendance record. Advice and information on Elective Home Education can be obtained from the local Attendance Team, or from www.hertfordshire.gov.uk or from a number of independent websites including www.education-otherwise.org

On receipt of written notification from the parent the academy must:

- Remove the student from roll at the end of their expected final day
- Send the Removal from Roll form together with a copy of the parent's letter which states their intention to Electively Home Educate to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days.

8e. Student has moved, has ceased to attend and the new address is not within a reasonable distance of the school/academy (except in the case of a boarder):

- The student should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days

8f. Student has failed to return after being granted leave of absence for exceptional circumstances in accordance with regulation 7(1A)

A student's name may only be removed from roll after ten school days have elapsed following the agreed date of return **and** the school/academy does not have reasonable grounds to believe the student is unable to attend due to sickness or reasonable cause **and** the school/academy **and** the local authority have failed to ascertain the student's whereabouts after 'jointly making reasonable enquiries.' Academies should:

- Make contact with parents/relatives to check that there is no good reason for the absence eg disrupted travel arrangements or illness
- Mark the absence as authorised if there is a valid reason, using the relevant code
- Mark the absence as unauthorised if there is not a valid reason, using the relevant code
- Contact their relevant Attendance Team if there are concerns about the welfare of the student or if they are unable to make contact with the parents

The Attendance team will work with the academy in making reasonable enquiries as to the student's whereabouts.

Once the academy and the local authority have completed their enquiries and ten school days have elapsed the academy should:

- Remove the student from roll with effect from ten school days after the expected date of return
- Send a Removal from Roll form to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days.

8g. Student is medically unfit and is likely to remain so beyond compulsory school age

A student may only be removed from roll on medical grounds if he/she has been **certified** by the academy's Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend before ceasing to be of compulsory school age **and** the student does not intend to continue at the school/academy beyond compulsory school age.

- The student should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days

8h. Student has been continuously absent for not less than twenty school days

This regulation applies **only** if at no time during the absence was it authorised, **and**, the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the student has been unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause **and** the joint enquiries undertaken by the school/academy and the local education authority have failed to ascertain where the student is.

- The academy should contact their allocated Attendance Improvement Officer, or their local Attendance Manager who will work with the school/academy to try to locate the student.
- If all enquiries have failed to locate the student, the school/academy should remove the student's name from roll, complete the Removal from Roll form and send it to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days.

8i. Student is in custody

A student may be removed from roll if serving a custodial sentence of four months or longer and the Principal does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student will return at the end of that period. The decision to remove a student from roll in this situation should be taken in consultation with the relevant Targeted Youth Support Team

- The student should be removed from roll at the end of their final day
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days

8j. Student has died

A student who has died may only be removed from roll once official notification has been received. This would usually come from the student's parents but may come from another source, eg relatives or police.

- The student should be removed from roll using the date of death as the removal date
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days
- No CTF is required

8k. Student will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets

In order for this regulation to apply the relevant person will have indicated that the student will cease to attend the school/academy; or the student does not meet the academic entry requirements to the school/academy sixth form

- In the case of a student who is no longer of compulsory school age, a Removal from Roll form is not required

8l. Student has ceased to be a student of the school

This regulation does **not** apply to and may **not** be used by Maintained Schools, including ESC's, Academies, including ESC's, City Technology Colleges or City Colleges for Technology or Arts

8m. Student has been permanently excluded

The student may **not** be removed from roll until any appeals process has been concluded.

- The student should be removed from roll using the school day after the conclusion of any appeals process as the date of removal from roll
- If no appeal has been lodged within 15 school days the student may be removed from roll on the 16th school day following the exclusion
- A Removal from Roll form should be completed and returned to the relevant Attendance Team within five school days
- No CTF is required

If a school is told that a student is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the student's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the student will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. Whenever a student joins or leaves a school/academy a Common Transfer File (CTF) MUST accompany him or her. Further information on the transfer of a CTF can be found on www.teachernet.gov.uk and www.education.gov.uk or http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/traded/sitss/mis/data_collection/ctf.shtml

Appendix 2

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- [a] to his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] to any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Appendix 3

Register and Admission Roll Keeping

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Student Registration] (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016.

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- 1 Unauthorised Absence
- 2 Authorised Absence
- 3 Approved Educational Activity

1 Unauthorised Absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2 Authorised Absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996. The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school may request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The Principal may not authorise medical absence without this evidence. The school may authorise absence under certain specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Principal in advance to secure authorisation. This may include work related interviews and meetings with external agencies (ie CAMHS). The Principal may also authorise events where students are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

3 Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration