# Attendance policy

## The Byrchall High School

| Approved by: | A Birchall | **Date:** 20/05/2022 |
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| **Next review due by:** | May 2023. | |

# Contents

# 1. Aims and purpose

Regular school attendance is essential if pupils are to achieve their full potential.  There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement at GCSE level, with poor attenders much less likely to achieve five good passes at GCSE, including English and Maths. Similarly, research clearly demonstrates a strong correlation between high absenteeism in schools and poor pupil attainment when studying A Level subjects.

Byrchall High School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make appositive contribution to their community.

Byrchall values all pupils and we will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and work to overcome any barriers.

Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, SEND, bullying and behaviour.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

> Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence and action support, as necessary

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

# 2. Roles and responsibilities

Byrchall High School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

## 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

> Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with

> Ensuring that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## 3.3 SLT Attendance Lead

The SLT Attendance Lead. Mrs Cheryl Smith – (csmith@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk) will::

> Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is actively promoted to pupils and their parents/carers

> Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance.  E.g. quality first teaching and learning experiences that encourage pupils to attend, learn and achieve.

> Ensure implementation of this policy at the school

> Regularly review the school's attendance policy and ensure the required resources and available to fully implement the policy.

> Promote good attendance at all times including the use of rewards and sanctions

> Monitor school-level absence data, including that of groups of learners and reporting it to the headteacher

> Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor attendance of all students are implemented.

> Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

### 3.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers will be:

> Asked to talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.

> Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.

> Encourage their child to look to the future and have high aspirations

> Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.

> Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. 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, take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education. Form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home

> Encourage routine at home

### 3.5 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

> Ensures that the importance and value of good attendance is actively promoted to pupils and their parents/carers

> Promotes good attendance at all times including the use of rewards and sanctions

> Monitors attendance data across the school, at a group and at an individual pupil level

> Reports concerns about attendance to the Assistant Headteacher

> Works with attendance support staff, year teams and teachers to tackle persistent absence

> Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

> Uses a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

### 3.6 Attendance Support Staff

Attendance Support Staff will:

> Promote good attendance at all times including the use of rewards and sanctions

> Support staff in the correct marking of attendance registers

> Check and amend absence codes

> Review and identify trends of absence

> Contact parents/carers to address concerns as necessary

## 3.7 Year teams & Teachers

Year teams and teachers:

> Are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

> Provide a safe learning environment

> Welcome pupils back to school after a period of absence and supporting pupils in the catch-up of work

> Promote good attendance at all times including the use of rewards and sanctions

> Deliver quality first teaching in which pupils learn and achieve

> Report to the designated staff any concerns re pupil attendance including any patterns noticed

## 3.7 School office staff

School office staff take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

# 4. Recording attendance

## 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school for morning registration at 8.30am.

The register for the first session will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.10pm and will be kept open until 12.40pm.

If the electronic registration system is not functioning for any reason or in the case of supply teachers, a paper register should be taken and returned to Student Enquiries.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents telephone the school on 01942 728 221, selecting the option to report a pupil absence. Pupils are encouraged to bring into school a confirmation note on return that is handed to the form tutor.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

The school operates a first day of absence call system – "Truancy Call" where the parents/carers of any absent pupil is contacted via an automated system on the first day of absence. This assists school in stressing to parents the importance school places on regular attendance. Staff will follow up with families should no contact be received.

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Pupils are to bring to Student Enquiries a written note with evidence of the appointment if possible.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code "L"

> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code "U"

Form tutors are provided with weekly attendance and punctuality statistic information.  This is discussed with pupils and sanctions issued following a tiered system. At all stages parents/carers are informed.  Year teams monitor their year groups attendance and punctuality weekly.

## 4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

> Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by sending a Truancy Call.  If no response is received follow up via telephone.

> Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance details are sent to parents 3 times a year via their child's assessment report.  Data is discussed once a year at a form tutor evening.  Within subject parents evening it is the responsibility of all staff to discuss attendance of pupils. Parents are able to log into Edulink at any time to view attendance and punctuality data.

# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. Applications for Leave of Absence, where dates are known in advance must be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date. A leave of absence form can be found on the school website and is also available from reception.

Examples of unsatisfactory requests include:

- A pupil/family member birthday

- Family holidays

- "Couldn't get up"

- Closure of a sibling's school

- Illness where the child is considered well enough the attend school.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.  If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Persistent absence is attendance that falls below 90%.  Any child with attendance below 95% is at risk from persistent absence.

School recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life.  This may be related to problems at home and/or in school.  Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school.  E.g., bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse.

We also recongise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, e.g., those students with SEND, EAL pupils, PP pupils and those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance including:

- Discussion with pupils                          - Referrals to support agencies

- Discussion with parents/carers            - Careers advise

- Letters                                                - Small group/1-2-1 tutoring

- Attendance report cards                       - Out of hours learning

- Attendance action plans                       - EHC support

- Rewards                                              - Early Help Assessment

- Mentoring                                            - Alternative Provision

- Various pastoral interventions

- -Reintegration support packages

### 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

# 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Byrchall is committed to actively promoting good attendance this is done using the following strategies:

- Quality first lessons in which pupils learn and achieve
- Teachers promote the next lesson and sequence of lessons to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- Regularly communicate the importance of attendance and punctuality to pupils and their families
- Weekly form tutor review of attendance and punctuality
- Reward good attendance via achievement points, certificates and raffles
- Welcome pupils back from period of absence and support them with catch-up of work
- Sanction poor punctuality and promptly intervene with those at risk of PA
- Forging positive relationships with families early
- Monitor whole school and group attendance regularly to identify patterns and action interventions
- Bespoke interventions to support pupils and families
- Referral to local authority attendance team
- Liaison with support agencies
- Use of fixed penalty notices

# 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Each week the attendance officer collates individual pupil data and group data. This is shared with SLT, HOY and key pastoral staff. Patterns are identified and interventions actioned as needed. After a period of time success of interventions is evaluated.

# 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by C Smith – Assistant Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by governors.

# 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy        - SEND policy

- Behaviour policy                                - Pupil Premium Policy

# 10.  Covid-19 Addendum

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Supporting parents/carers and pupils who are concerned about the return to school due to coronavirus

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2021 until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. It sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply. We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

As of 1st September 2021 attendance is mandatory.  The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

Pupils must attend school unless their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, school will provide remote education.

# 11. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-----------|----------|
| **/** | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| **\** | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| **L** | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **B** | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| **D** | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **J** | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| **P** | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| **V** | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| **W** | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-----------|----------|
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **E** | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| **H** | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of |

| | | time) |
|---|---|---|
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| **Z** | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |