



## **BIRKENHEAD HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY ATTENDANCE STATEMENT SENIOR SCHOOL**

The academy's attendance statement embodies DfE and Local Authority policy and practice. All schools are required to report the authorised and unauthorised absence of pupils of compulsory school age. An absence is deemed unauthorised if either a pupil has been absent without the permission of the Principal or no note of explanation validates the absence. Unauthorised absences are recorded on reports and in public data documents printed by the government as truancy; this reflects on the reputation of the school as well as on the individual.

**Only the academy, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents/carers.**

### **Absence**

Absence, whatever its cause is detrimental to any pupil's progress and chances of success in public examinations. Parents/carers are expected to keep requests for the authorisation of absence to a minimum and in particular to refrain from arranging family holidays in term time. Amendments to Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Head Teachers/Principals may only grant leave of absence *in exceptional circumstances*.

If there is a planned absence then parents/carers should submit their request to the Principal no later than three days prior to the date of absence. If an absence is authorised by the Principal then parents/carers will be notified. An absence note will not be required on return for pre-authorised absences.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to telephone school concerning the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence and to provide such further information as may be required. On her return to school, parents/carers must supply a note or email to the pupil's form tutor indicating the cause of the absence. If this is not forthcoming within the week following the first day of absence, the absence will be investigated. If no absence note is received, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

If an absence occurs, it is the responsibility of the pupil to make up any lost work. If an absence is known in advance, the pupil must approach individual members of staff for guidance.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Attendance below 90% with at least 10 days lost due to unauthorised absence. These do not need to be consecutive.
- 5 days or more unauthorised absence due to holidays in term time.
- Pupils stopped on Police Truancy Sweeps in some circumstances, for example, if this is repeated.
- The presence of an excluded pupil in a public place at any time during school hours in that pupil's first five days of a school exclusion without good reason.
- A pupil arrives late after the registers are closed at 9.30am (using a code U) on 10 or more separate occasions.



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### **Holidays in term time**

If a pupil is taken on holiday without permission for 5 days or more the academy will issue (via the Local Authority) a Warning Letter or a Fixed Penalty Notice regardless of the pupil's overall attendance. If a pupil does not return from a holiday as expected this will be followed up by contacting the home or emergency contact.

### **Returning to school**

Sometimes a pupil who has been off school for some time finds it difficult to return. It is of paramount importance that parents/carers contact the Vice Principal or Assistant Vice Principal responsible for the particular pupil's Key Stage in school to discuss our procedures for supported reintegration.

### **Punctuality**

Pupils are expected to be prompt for registration. If she is late, she must register with her form tutor if possible. Otherwise, she must sign in at the office as soon as she arrives. If she fails to do this, the academy will assume she is absent. Lateness without reasonable cause will be deemed to be unauthorised absence. Lateness after 9.30am will be deemed as an absence and will require a note of explanation from a parent/carer.

Monitoring attendance is an essential method of insuring our pupils' safety. Any member of staff who suspects a pupil is leaving school without good reason must alert the appropriate Progress Leader or a member of the SLT. Any member of staff who finds a girl out of lessons should send her back to her lessons and inform her Form Tutor and Progress Leader. If the pupil is too unwell to return to her lesson then she should be sent to reception to see her Progress Leader or a member of the SLT who will decide if she should be sent home.

### **Reasons for absence**

#### Illness

Parents/carers must inform the school on the first day if their daughter is ill.

#### Medical and Dental Appointments

Routine visits to the dentist, optician etc., should be arranged during school holidays or out of school hours. Authorisation for medical and dental appointments can be given in an emergency or other unavoidable circumstances.

#### Bereavement

It is helpful if we are informed of family bereavement so that we can offer pupils sympathetic support. Absence under such circumstances will, of course, be authorised.

#### Religious Observance

Absence can be authorised on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a pupil's parents/carers belong.

#### Family/Domestic Problems

Looking after other children, minding the house, or shopping within school hours are not acceptable reasons for absence under the law.



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### Special Occasions

Exceptional occasions may be sanctioned through authorised absence. Such events might include a sibling's graduation or family wedding. Attending sports events or concerts are not sufficient cause for authorisation.

### Study Leave

Study leave may be authorised during the official examination period for Years 11 and 13 only. A letter is always sent to parents/carers before study leave commences. Parents/carers are asked to note carefully the dates on which study leave commences.

Although most girls prefer to study at home during examination periods, lessons will continue until the subject's final exam. There are always study facilities available in school for those who wish to work in school. Authorisation for absence for studying will not be given for periods outside those indicated to parents/carers.

Study leave is a privilege which may be withdrawn if a pupil seems unlikely to use the time profitably.

### Work Experience

Pupils in Years 12 and 13 will be encouraged to gain work experience during the school holiday periods. In addition to this there will be a work experience week for Y12 pupils as indicated on the school calendar.

Some 6<sup>th</sup> form pupils may also be permitted to carry out work experience during times of the day when they have a study period. This must be agreed with the Head of Sixth Form and Principal.

### **SIXTH FORM**

The same guidelines should be followed, with the addition of the following specific circumstances:

#### Open Days

Sixth Form pupils are expected to visit Universities and Colleges during school holidays. However, a maximum two Open Days may be attended during term time if appropriate letters requesting authorisation for absence are brought in.

#### Interviews

Sixth Formers must, of course, attend interviews at Universities and Colleges at the times and on the dates allocated by the institutions. It is essential that they keep their Form Tutors informed of these dates.

#### Lunch Hours

Year 12 pupils remain in school throughout the school day for lessons and for private study. With written parental permission Year 12 and Year 13 may go out in the lunch hour, but must return by 1.45pm.

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