Brine Leas Sixth Form Attendance Policy

It is a key aim that Sixth Form students should have 100% attendance in order to maximise their educational experiences and attainment. In line with this, all Sixth Form students will be required to attend all timetabled lessons, Enrichment sessions, Tutorials and 1:1 meetings. Where students are eligible for EMA payments, if the student has failed to attend fully, then the student will receive no EMA payment for that week, and the Sixth Form will notify the Payment Body to that effect. However, we accept that some absences are unavoidable and in some circumstances the Sixth Form will deem absence to be authorised. Authorised absence will not affect weekly EMA payments.

Absences will be considered to be unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. In other words, where there is an absence and the student wishes this to be authorised, it is **up to the student** to notify and agree this with the Sixth Form in line with this policy. If the absence can be foreseen, then the student must apply for authorised absence **in advance** by completing **Sixth form Excusal Form** and forwarding these to the appropriate subject staff and the sixth form administrator. This must be done **at least two days before any planned absence**. It is not acceptable to miss classes without prior notification and then to ask that the absence should be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests for planned absence of more than one day must be submitted in writing by the student or parent to the Assistant Director of the Sixth Form (Miss Lewis). If this is approved Excusal Form should then be completed and submitted as detailed above.

Where the reason for absence could not reasonably have been foreseen, the Sixth Form will consider whether the absence should be authorised. An absence which could not have been notified in advance should be notified to the Sixth Form on the day in question; unless, exceptionally, there is a good reason why this could not be done. This should be done by a phone call to the Sixth Form Administrators (01270 621612) by 9:30am on the day of absence. If absence is due to illness, students should give details of the nature of the complaint and an estimate of the time they will be absent. On return to Sixth Form the student should then complete a **Student Self Certification Form** and have this countersigned by a parent/guardian before returning it to the Sixth Form Administrator. This must be done within **48 hours** of return.

Absences which can be foreseen

These will be authorised only if the reason given for the absence is a valid one. The following are examples of reasons which would usually be considered to be acceptable:

- A medical appointment which **cannot** be arranged outside Sixth Form hours
- To look after a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities
 however this does not cover babysitting younger siblings
- A religious holiday in line with the student's faith
- A visit to a University either to attend an open day (maximum of 5 days to be approved in a year) or for interview
- A career related interview
- An appointment with a Connexions Advisor (although these should normally be scheduled to avoid disruption to studies)
- A work experience placement which is an integral part of a course, cannot be arranged during the Enrichment slot and for which the student does not receive a wage
- Participating in a significant extra-curricular activity, such as drama, music, sport or volunteering.

Authorised absence will be granted only where the activity reflects a significant level of personal achievement, for example, taking part in a regional or national event, or for some other one-off event. Authorised absences for this reason will be granted sparingly; where a pattern of frequent participation in such activities is proposed, solutions will be explored personally with the student

- Attendance at the funeral of a close friend or immediate family
- Severe disruption to a student's mode of transport where there is no practical way of getting to Sixth Form

- A driving test
- Court attendance
- Family bereavement
- Wedding of an immediate family member
- Visits approved by the Sixth Form
- Department study days
- Study leave

These are general guidelines, and we will take account of: the inherent reasonableness of any case; the number of absences taken by any one individual; and repetitions of the same reason. In all cases Excusal Forms must be completed by the students, countersigned by a parent/guardian and submitted to subject staff and the sixth form administrator (or the Assistant Director of Sixth Form if more than one day of absence is requested).

The following reasons for absence would **not** be acceptable:

- Holiday taken during term-time
- Social events during term-time
- Part or full time work which is not part of the student's programme of study
- Student union or political activities
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Shopping
- Driving lessons and the driving theory test
- Late arrival to lessons/tutorials
- Routine medical/dental appointments.
- Missing lessons to complete coursework / homework.
- Taking unofficial exam study leave

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but is to give an indication of the types of absence that would not be acceptable.

Absences which cannot be foreseen in advance

Where an absence genuinely could not be foreseen in advance, the student or parent should tell the Sixth Form as soon as possible on the day in question that they will be missing classes in line with the advice given earlier in this policy. The only exception to the above is where the student has a strong reason why they failed to contact the Sixth Form. This might be because an event has been particularly disturbing or unpleasant, or because of a genuine practical barrier. Any such reasons must be notified to the Personal Tutor or Sixth Form Leadership as soon as possible.

The following are examples of reasons for absence which would tend to be acceptable, provided that the Sixth Form has been notified on the day:

- An emergency involving a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities. Sudden severe illness would be an example. However, while such cases will be treated sympathetically on a one-off-basis, they will not be acceptable as regular grounds for authorizing absence.
- Family bereavement.
- Transport problems, where these were **not** known about in advance, and where there is no alternative means to hand.
- Sickness Absence up to a **maximum** of 10 days self-certificated absence per year may be authorised through **Student Self Certification Forms**. However, the Sixth Form is entitled to turn down applications for authorised sickness absence for EMA payments if they have reason to doubt their validity. Any emerging pattern of non-attendance due to sickness without explanation would be unacceptable. Where students are absent for a period of more than 5 days a medical certificate will be required for EMA payments to be authorised. Extended sickness absence will lead to the

renegotiation of the EMA contract and the possibility of the withdrawal of EMA payments as these are dependent on attendance at the Sixth Form.

The Sixth Form will regard students reaching attendance of over 95% as having excellent attendance and will report it as such in any reference given.

Attendances of over 93% will be rewarded as part of the Employability Award – 93% is Bronze level, 95% Silver and 98% Gold.

Students with attendance levels of 85% or below may expect to be subject to intervention strategies from their Personal Tutor, Student Support Services or the Sixth Form Leadership. These may include a mixture of support and sanction and will usually involve parental contact including meetings. We reserve the right to not support the exam entries of students whose attendance is persistently below 85%. Such students may be withdrawn from some or all of their examinations and their place at BL6 may be withdrawn if unacceptable attendance continues.

