



Barnfields Primary School  
Attendance Policy



<b>Date Approved: September 2021</b>	<b>Print Name: Richard Chadwick</b>
<b>Date to be Reviewed: September 2022</b>	<b>Signed: Richard Chadwick</b>

### 1. Aims

Our Attendance Policy aims to:

- Support pupils and their parents to fulfil their responsibility in making sure that their child receives a full-time education and is always punctual so that they can access that education to the best of their ability.
- Make parents aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets (<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>)

### 2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

### 3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

**Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

**Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

**Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

**Persistent absenteeism:**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

**4. Principles**

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

This policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the wellbeing of children including safeguarding, children missing in education, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs. All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. The attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any concerns about persistent poor attendance to the Families First Local Support Team for further action

**5. Statutory Duties**

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day. This shows whether the pupil is present or engaged in an approved educational activity off-site or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. Information about the cause of each absence is therefore always required either by telephone, email or letter. There are only four legitimate reasons for absence:

- religious observance
- illness of a child
- death of close family member
- urgent medical appointment

AUTHORISED ABSENCE means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES are those which the school does not consider reasonable and is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence. This includes:

- Parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- Truancy for all or part of the school day
- Absences where the school has not yet received an acceptable explanation
- Any other circumstance where the Headteacher has not given authorisation

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, parents should never cover up their absence or give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. The school is always willing to support parents whose children are experiencing difficulties that may result in non-attendance. Parents should contact the school at an early stage so that we can work together to resolve any problems. Working in partnership nearly always brings success. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parents may seek further support with other agencies. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support.

When all measures to improve the pupil's attendance have failed, a Penalty Notice can be issued or court proceedings used to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the pupil. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

## 6. Responsibilities of the School

We see it as our duty to promote the importance of good attendance to both children and parents. At each parents evening, the child's class teacher discusses where that child is in their learning and how they can improve further. As part of this discussion, we keep the parents up to date with their child's attendance from the start of the academic year up to that point.

Additionally, at the end of each term, the senior leaders of the school will monitor the attendance throughout the school. Parents will then be contacted by a senior leader through a phone call if their child's attendance has dipped under 92%. If the child's attendance has dipped under 90%, they will be informed in writing by the Headteacher. We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school, such as the School Nurse, in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.

**NB** When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 85% in any term without good reason, a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer may be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444

## 7. Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

It is the legal duty of the parent or carer to ensure that their child has as little time away from school as possible. As part of this duty the parent or carer must:

- Inform school straight away if their child cannot attend and give the reason by 9.10am
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle, including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from their G.P if they are unsure how long to keep their child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.

- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

## 8. Procedures

Parents will be informed annually via the School website about the School Attendance Policy.

- If a pupil is absent from school, parents should contact the school by telephone before 9.10am. Parents are able to leave a message on the answerphone out of school hours.
- If no notification has been received by 9.30am, the school will make first day contact. This contact will be done using the 'Teachers2Parents' text messaging service.
- In the event that no notification has been provided, school will aim to make contact through a telephone call or a home visit.
- Pupils who arrive late for school and miss morning registration must sign in at the office.
- The official school register will close at: morning session – 9.10am afternoon session – 1.15pm.
- Where SLT have concerns that non-attendance is adversely affecting pupil progress they will consult the parents in the first instance.
- Attendance will be monitored every two weeks by a Senior Leader and letters will be sent home where there are concerns about poor attendance. Home visits will be made where appropriate.
- The Senior Leader may convene a meeting between parents, appropriate school staff, and any relevant external agencies. This meeting may also consider issues of punctuality and behaviour. If a pupil has 20 unauthorised sessions (10 days) during a twelve week period, a referral to the Local Authority may be made by the school.
- The Local Authority will review the current situation; offer support and consider further action, which could be to recognise that attendance has improved or to follow more formal procedures where attendance has not improved. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parents receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.
- Parents who are subject to a Penalty Notice have three choices: - Pay the £60 fine within 21 days. - Pay £120 after 21 days but within 28 days. - Do not pay the fine. In this case, the Notice will be withdrawn and Magistrates Court proceedings will start. This could result in a fine of up to £1,000 for each pupil whose attendance is causing concern and for each parent involved in the prosecution.

## 9. Holidays during Term Time

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- In exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for a maximum of five days of holiday providing your child has a good (95% or higher) attendance record over the previous three terms.
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

**Changes to the Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices Commencing 1st January 2018**

***Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time.***

*Any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The Headteacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the Headteacher to an Education Welfare Officer.*

**Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness.**

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve-week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine

**10. Late Arrivals**

All children who arrive after 9am must report to the main office. Here, parents are required to sign their child in to ensure that their attendance is recorded. Late arrivals will be monitored by the Headteacher.

**11. Admissions Register**

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school. All schools must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they:

- Have been taken out of the school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children).
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

**12. Elective Home Education**

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at [enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk) of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

**13. Roles**

**School Administration:**

- Record late arrivals.
- Retain all absence notes during the year.
- If parents fail to notify the school of a pupil's absence by 9.10am, the administrator will contact parents by telephone/text on the first day of absence to ascertain the reason.
- Provide teachers with data for annual reports.
- Send appropriate letters to parents where there are concerns about absences.
- Provide the Headteacher with details of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% on a half-termly basis.

**Teachers:**

- The teacher will mark the electronic register at 8.55 am (morning) and 1 pm (afternoon) prompt.
- Identify the correct code for absence.
- Pass onto the office all communications from parents about planned absence.
- Monitor attendance patterns and refer to Senior Leaders.
- Provide parents with attendance data at parent's evening and on the annual school report.

#### School Leadership:

- Oversee the tracking of pupils with poor or irregular attendance.
- Contact parents if child's attendance falls to 92% or below.
- Headteacher will inform parents in writing where attendance falls below 90%.
- Will contact parents when no explanation for absence has been received.
- Will request parental interview in persistent absence cases with other agency support.
- Attend multi-agency attendance meetings.
- Headteacher will monitor attendance and report to governors termly.
- Liaise with Educational Welfare Officer
- Make contact with parents where there are causes for concern (if a pupil has 20 unauthorised sessions during a twelve-week period).
- Record contact made in relation to these cases.
- Confirm in writing future requirements regarding attendance and medical notes.

#### Governors

- Set annual attendance targets.
- Review attendance patterns.

### 14. Using Attendance Data

A pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. The Attendance Administrator will provide relevant teachers with regular attendance for each pupil within their tutor group/class. Pupils will be grouped into categories based on their percentage attendance as follows:

96% - 100% WELL DONE - THIS IS EXCELLENT!	<b>YELLOW GROUP</b> 90% - 95.9% LOW ATTENDANCE	<b>RED GROUP</b> Less than 90% PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL
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Attendance during the school year	Number of days absent	Number of weeks absent	Number of lessons missed
70%	19 days	4 weeks	95
80%	38 days	8 weeks	190
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	285

### 15. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parent/carers and to promote good attendance. Equally, parent/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parent/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.