



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Why is very good attendance and punctuality important?

At Barnes Primary School we aim to encourage the very good attendance and punctuality of every learner by:

- clearly informing parents of attendance expectations and procedures
- clearly informing parents of punctuality expectations and procedures
- informing children how important very good attendance and punctuality is and what benefits will arise for them
- regularly monitoring attendance and punctuality
- identifying concerns with attendance and punctuality at an early stage and taking steps to address them
- publishing attendance data in each newsletter
- publishing punctuality data
- training staff to manage registers and the process for authorising absences.

We are a high achieving school that is committed to enabling all children to reach the highest possible standards in all aspects of learning. We want all children to derive the maximum benefit from the educational provision we offer. We are committed to ensuring that every child receives their entitlement to 5 days a week schooling for just under 37 weeks a year. We know, from our analysis of pupil performance data over a sustained time frame, that there is a consistent correlation between poor attendance and lower than average attainment. Put simply, in the vast majority of cases, children who attend school more often (over 95%) do better than those who attend less often (below 95%).

Poor attendance can significantly affect a child's learning. This is because:

- valuable learning episodes that connect with previous and future learning are missed
- there is a lack of continuity in the child's learning experience
- 'learning momentum' is lost, as the structured routine of coming to school each day is broken. This unsettles children
- a child's self-esteem is frequently negatively affected on returning to school, as the work is harder for the reasons outlined above

Persistent lateness creates a number of avoidable difficulties:

- the learning of all the other children who arrived at school on time is interrupted, as the teacher has to explain what the class are doing to the late child
- the self-esteem of the child concerned is negatively affected: the child often feels embarrassed because all their peers notice their late entry to classroom
- the day starts off in a negative way for the child concerned – that can have a significant influence on what follows
- additional, unnecessary work is created for busy administrative staff.

Our partnership

At Barnes Primary School we aim to build a strong working partnership between the family and school to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to learn.

It is the parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school during term time, and that the school is properly informed about the reasons for any break in attendance. The exception is, of course, when a child is unwell and unfit to attend school, or at a time of particular difficulty for a child's family. Parents have to make the decision about whether or not their child is unfit to attend school. The school recognises that this can sometimes be a difficult decision.

Our pledge

1. In all matters relating to attendance and punctuality teachers and managers at the school will adopt a fair, reasonable and balanced approach to any issues that arise. We appreciate that bringing up children is challenging and that all families experience times of difficulty. Our expectations for good attendance will be high - because we want the best for all children – but we will show a humane and sensitive approach. We will always be prepared to show flexibility to parents whose children consistently achieve good attendance.
2. Sometimes, when a child complains of feeling unwell, or the child is not quite herself, parents are not sure whether to bring their child to school. More often than not, once at school, the child settles and manages to get through the day. It is acknowledged that no parent wants their child to be unwell and distressed at school. Should a parent decide to bring their child to school and the child continues to feel unwell (or starts to feel worse) the school will always contact parents immediately. Whilst waiting to be picked up we will take great care of the child, ensuring that she is as comfortable as possible.
3. We celebrate attendance each week in assembly with KS1 and attendance cup. At the end of the academic year we have special 100% certificates for those pupils who have not missed a day in the academic year.

Reporting an absence

This can be done by phone (020 8876 7358) – leaving a message under option 1 (Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1) or option 2 (Key Stage 2), or by e-mail (info@barnes.richmond.sch.uk).

First day absence call

The school operates this system. It involves a polite telephone call from administrative staff at school on the first day of an absence if notification has not been received from parents. The purpose of the call is to ascertain the reason for the child's absence.

The school year

Whilst term dates and the lengths of terms tend to fluctuate, the general structure of the school year is as follows:

Term	Weeks (rounded)	Teaching Days
Autumn Term 1	8	38
Autumn Term 2	7	34
Spring Term 1	6	30
Spring Term 2	6	29
Summer Term 1	5	24
Summer Term 2	6	29

Term time holidays

Children are at school for just under 37 weeks a year (190 days). They are on holiday for a full 14 weeks, plus 5 teacher training days and a Bank Holiday in May. This represents over a quarter of the year. This is the time when parents should plan their vacations. Whilst we appreciate that, unfortunately, air lines reduce their pricing structure during term time, we cannot condone term time holidays, unless there are special circumstances. So, for example, skiing holidays should take place at Christmas, February half-term or during Easter; the best time for a prolonged holiday to a distant country is the extended six week break in the summer.

Family holidays in term time do not qualify as a reason for granting leave of absence. The Governing Body, and the Local Authority, has a firm policy not to authorise holidays in term time unless exceptional circumstances exist. Any request for a term time holiday should be made to the Headteacher. The authorisation of any term time absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

The final week of term

Children at Barnes work up to and including the last day of term. This is not a school where children are occupied, watching DVDs and playing board games, in the final few days of term. Every single teaching day is used for just that: to teach in order to maximise learning.

The last day of half-term and the last day of term

School finishes at 3.15 pm each day. The only exceptions to that are:

- the final day of each half-term and the final day of each term. On these occasions school finishes at the earlier time of 2.30 pm

Registration

Children's attendance is noted in the school's electronic registers. Registers are the recognised system in the school for monitoring attendance and punctuality, and are taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session. Timings are as follows:

Age range	Register opens	Register closes Morning	Register closes Afternoon
Early Years	8.55 am	9.00 am	1.05 pm
Key Stage 1	8.55 am	9.00 am	1.20 pm
Key Stage 2	8.55 am	9.00 am	1.20 pm

Lessons start at 9.00 am – this is learning time.

If a child enters class after 9.00 am they are officially marked as late. If a child enters the classroom after 9.45 am they are officially marked as absent for the morning session. It is common knowledge that in our locality the railway crossing can hold parents up for a considerable time and that all areas of London are prone to early morning traffic congestion. Parents are politely asked to factor these issues into their travel plans and ensure that sufficient time is set aside to manage these potential hazards.

Attendance data, 2005-06 to 2010-11

Thanks to a combination of the commitment and support from parents and children, along with the school's robust, but sensitive, procedures for challenging unacceptable absences from school, our attendance figures have risen. Our target yearly attendance average for 2013-14 is **97.1%**

Year	Attendance
2005-06	94%
2006-07	95.2%
2007-08	95.7%
2008-09	96.2%
2009-10	95.7%
2010-11	96.5%
2011-12	97.0%
2012-13	96.8%
2013-14	97.0%
2014-15	97.4%
2015-16	97.4%
2016-17	97.03%
2017-18	97.04%
2018-19	96.87%
3 year average	96.98%
5 year average	97.1%

The following article appeared in the school newsletter on 07/10/19. It shows clearly what an impact an increase in overall school attendance can have on the number of days children attend.

*Thank you very much indeed for bringing your children to school so regularly last academic year. Our average attendance for the 2018-19 academic year was our best ever: **96.87%**.*

- *Pupils come to school for 38 weeks a year – that’s $38 \times 5 = 190$ days per pupil*
- *Excluding the nursery, the school roll average, over a 5 year period, is 405 pupils*
- *Total number of days a year for all pupils: $405 \text{ pupils} \times 190 \text{ days} = 76,950 \text{ school days}$*
- *In 2005-06 72,333 days were attended 4,617 were missed*
- *In 2010-11 74,256 days were attended 2,693 were missed*
- *So, an extra 1,924 days were attended in 2010-11 compared to 2005-06*
- *On average that’s 4.75 days per child ($1,924 \div 405$) – almost a whole week! That’s significant!*

Thresholds for reporting attendance to parents in end of year reports

		Equivalent days off in the school year
Outstanding	98% or above	3 days
Good	96% to 97.9%	4-7 days
Satisfactory	93% to 95.9%	8-13 days
Inadequate	Below 93%	More than 13 days

* Please note that the term ‘inadequate’ will be used with care and discretion. It will never be used when the school has clear, unequivocal evidence of very good reasons for the child’s low attendance. For example:

- a child may need an operation and take four weeks off
- there may be a family crisis which involves a child having to miss a considerable amount of school.

The term ‘satisfactory’ will be used by teachers in such situations.

Procedures for extended leave and overseas visits

Very occasionally, parents may request an extended period of leave for their child. Any request will be treated, individually, on its merits. The following guidance on this issue has been prepared by Richmond’s Legal Services.

- Parents who wish their child to be away from school for the purpose of an overseas visit must apply to the Headteacher in advance of the proposed period of absence and the proposed dates of absence.
- This request must be made prior to any travel tickets being booked.
- If the pupil is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practicing or affected community, some countries in particular have a very high risk of FGM - 98% in Somalia and 91% in Egypt. Other countries who engage in FGM (cutting) are: Chad, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iran, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Sudan, however there are more than 28 countries in Africa and parts of the Middle East who practice FGM. Please note that the term FGM is called something different in each country.
- Due to migration FGM is also taking place in Australia, Europe and in the UK.
- In communities where FGM is the social norm, it is practised by Muslims, Christians and followers of indigenous religions which suggests that the practice is more cultural than a religious practice
- If the Head teacher suspects that FGM may take place they will use direct questioning to ascertain whether ‘cutting’ of the girl will be undertaken during this Holiday.
 - The prescribed questions are:
 - Do you come from a Community that practices cutting (FGM)?
 - Have you or any member of your family been cut?
 - Do you or any member of your family or community plan to have your daughter cut?

- Answering YES to at least one of these questions raises the risk of FGM – and the school should follow safeguarding procedures.
- The Head teacher will then take the information from this meeting and make a decision on whether to refer to local CYPS or the Police
- The Headteacher must feel satisfied that the visit constituted exceptional circumstances. He retains the right to refuse to authorise a term time holiday.
- A contact address for the pupil during the period of absence will be provided.
- If the Headteacher approves the extended leave, the parents must be aware that robust procedures, including the possible removal of the child’s name from the school register, will be enforced if the child does not return by the agreed date.
- During the period of agreed absence the child’s absence will be authorised under category ‘J’.
- If the child does not return by the agreed date, the absence will be unauthorised and the Headteacher will attempt to find out the reason for the absence.
- If the Headteacher decides to remove a child’s name from the register, a warning letter will be sent to the parents, and the Local Authority will receive notification.

Sue Jepson
Headteacher

Covid-19 Update (May 2020)

Activity	Action	Responsible Person
Ensure that someone is responsible for ensuring these actions are completed		Sue/Polly
Ensure governors are aware of the Government's interim safeguarding guidance	Email sent	Sue/Polly
Ensure that someone is responsible for continuity in safeguarding leadership	Monitoring/DSL on site	Sue
If you are a hub understand that you have the responsibility for safeguarding all children and staff		Sue/Ray/Anna
Ensure DSL is available, in-person, by phone or video link		Sue/Anna/Polly
Nominate a senior leader to be the onsite safeguarding lead		Sue
Create a Coronavirus Outbreak addendum to your child protection policy to include the specific issues for these circumstances	Added and read by all staff	Sue/Polly
Ensure staff know the new arrangements for DSLs and reporting concerns	Arrangements communicated to all staff by email	Sue
Understand what changes there may be for contacting the LADO		Polly
Understand what changes there may be for contacting the MASH team or other 'front door' services		Polly
Understand what changes there may be for contacting social workers		Polly

Know which children have social workers and how to contact them		Polly
Know which children are LAC/PLAC, who their Virtual School Head is and how to contact them		Polly
Know which children should be in school and follow up where they do not attend	Morning register	Steph
Ensure that emergency numbers and alternatives are kept up to date	Email sent out	Sue
Ensure that there are safeguarding induction processes for new staff, staff relocated to the school, and volunteers		Sue
Ensure that new staff, staff relocated to the school, and volunteers understand the staff code of conduct	If necessary	Sue
Ensure that any volunteers have been individually risk-assessed	If necessary	Antonia
Ensure that each vulnerable child has an easily transferable record of why they are vulnerable, a copy of the EHCP and/or CIN or CP Plan, the name of their social worker and contact details, for LAC children the name of the relevant Virtual School Head	Safeguarding files	Sue/Polly/Anna
Ensure there is a record of which staff are onsite daily		Sue
Ensure that the SCR is up to date with any relocated staff or volunteers and the checks that have been made		Antonia
Ensure that your safer recruitment processes are clear and adhered to, for example, be aware of anyone unknown to the school offering themselves as a volunteer		Antonia
Ensure that staff are aware that there may be an impact of the mental health of pupils, parents and staff or volunteers; and what support may be available	Support staff calls to families with referral to Polly if necessary	Polly
Consider what to do if there are no IT staff available		Harjit
Ensure that the school has an online teaching and learning policy which considers safeguarding risks	Advice in newsletter as well as school policy	James
Ensure that pupils, parents and staff know how to raise any safeguarding issues that may arise during any online learning	DSL rota	
Ensure that SLT has a plan for how any bereavements may be handled, including obtaining any support services, not otherwise shared *See charity websites, for example, Winston's Wish, Grief Encounter, Childhood Bereavement Network or Hope Encounter		Polly

Status

Date agreed: October 2014, with Covid-19 appendix added May 2020

Review date: October 2021