



PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show Barnes Primary School's commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and clearly communicating expectations with all stakeholders
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence with early identification and support for families
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

It is the legal requirement of every parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly, and an offence to condone absence from school without just cause.

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 children receive their entitlement to 5 days a week of schooling for 38 weeks a year. We know, from our analysis of pupil performance data over a sustained period, 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 do better than those who attend less often.



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
- a child becomes socially isolated



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 - this can have a significant influence on what follows
- additional, unnecessary work is created for busy administrative staff
- lateness and/or attendance can potentially be an indicator of a safeguarding issue.

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 and that high levels of attendance are maintained.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents>The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school (in the termly Headteacher Report to Governors) and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:



- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Children Missing in Education (CME) - after six or more days of no contact with parent, a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service
- Elective Home Education (ELE) - the school is obliged to inform the Local Authority of children removed from its admission register and will give home education as the reason, if notified of this by the parent
- Guidance for parents regarding **Elective Home Education**, published by Achieving for Children: <https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/community-information/information-and-advice/education-and-education-services/elective-home-education-ehe>

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

- The designated senior leader is responsible for:
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is a Deputy Head and can be contacted via info@barnes.richmond.sch.uk.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers



Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office daily at 08:45 and 13:15.

3.6 School front of house staff

School front of house staff will:

- Take calls and process emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Forward on emails from parents/carers to the headteacher, deputy headteacher, phase leader and class teacher/s where appropriate, in order to provide them with information in relation to attendance.

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day at 08:45 on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:45 on the day of any absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Jade Huxley (Deputy Headteacher), who can be contacted on jhuxley@barnes.richmond.sch.uk or via the main school office.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.

4. Recording attendance

Thresholds for attendance monitoring:

GREEN	Attendance registered as 95% and above
AMBER	Attendance registered as between 90%-95%
RED	Attendance registered as below 90% Also known as PA (Persistently Absent)

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

The term 'inadequate' is 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
- a family crisis which involves a child having to miss a considerable amount of school



In such circumstances, teachers will use the term 'satisfactory'.

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at 08:45 (the start of the first session of each school day) and once during the second session at 13:15. It will be completed using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 08:45 and ends at 15:15. Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45 on each school day.

The final week of term:

Pupils at Barnes Primary School work up to and including the last day of term. Every single teaching day is used for just that; to teach in order to maximise learning. All pupils are expected to attend every day, up to and including the last day of term. At the end of each half and full term, school finishes at 14:30 for all classes.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 emailing: absence@barnes.richmond.sch.uk stating the child's name, class and reason for absence or by calling the school on 020 8876 7358.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We provide clear guidance on when a child should not come to school due to a medical concern. 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 will be notified of this in advance.



4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment by contacting info@barnes.richmond.sch.uk or calling the front of houses on 020 8876 7358.

We strongly encourage parents 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 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:

- Will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may call around to the pupil's house to check all is okay or contact the police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 3 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with we will involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

4.6 Reporting to parents

Barnes Primary School will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels if their attendance falls below 95%. We will do this half termly.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:



- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement or funeral. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated via email to absence@barnes.richmond.sch.uk. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

Safeguarding - extended overseas visits:

Very occasionally, parents may request an extended period of leave for their child. Any request will be treated individually on its merits. Richmond's Legal Services Team has prepared the following guidance:

- 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
- This request must be made prior to any travel tickets being booked
- The Headteacher must feel satisfied that the visit constituted exceptional circumstances - they retain 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
- If the Headteacher 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 Headteacher will then take the information from this meeting and make a decision on whether to refer to local CYPS or the Police

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.



A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Barnes Primary School we celebrate attendance in our Friday assemblies. Attendance cups are issued for the class in EYFS / KS1 and KS2 with the highest attendance. We are mindful of children who have to be absent on a regular basis due to hospital treatments. Our attendance is also shared with parents on a biweekly basis in our newsletter.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Barnes Primary School works closely with families with complex barriers to attendance. Each situation is individually evaluated and an appropriate team and bespoke plan set up to support the child and family. This can involve our Wellbeing Mentor, SEND Lead, Deputy Headteachers and Headteacher, depending upon the devised and agreed plan.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

When a child is absent due to mental or physical ill health, regular medical hospital treatment or SEND Barnes Primary School will work closely with the families to support the family with attendance. Each situation is individually evaluated and an appropriate team and bespoke plan set up to support the child and family. This can involve our Wellbeing Mentor, SEND Lead, Deputy Headteachers and Headteacher, depending upon the devised and agreed plan and may result in an agreed reduced timetable. If this is the agreement, this will be reported to Governors in the Headteacher's termly report.



Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When a child is returning after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, Barnes Primary School will work closely with the families to support the child to reintegrate into their class and school. Each situation is individually evaluated and a bespoke plan set up to support the child and family. This can involve our Wellbeing Mentor, SEND Lead, Deputy Headteachers and Headteacher, depending upon the situation and may result in an agreed reduced timetable. If this is the agreement, this will be reported to Governors in the Headteachers termly report.

8. Attendance monitoring and reporting

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Attendance data is shared with the DfE via our management information system on a daily basis. Data will be collected 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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends and share these with our EWO at our half termly meetings
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teacher, phase leaders and the senior leadership team, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs leaders, designated safeguarding leads and the pupil premium lead)



- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. At Barnes Primary we track and engage with all families when attendance falls below 95%.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Write to parents to inform them of their child's attendance if it falls below 95%. Should absence persist, or fall below 90%, a second letter will be issued. Should absence persist or be below 90% an invitation to discuss the matter with a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be made. The Senior Leadership team member will offer support options and explain their child is also being monitored as part of the EWO half termly visits. A school attendance contract will be produced and agreed.
- Hold regular check in meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- If - in spite of the support of the school and advice from Educational Welfare Service - attendance does not improve, a further letter will be sent, after which a warning of legal action may follow.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biannually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Teaching Learning Access and Inclusion Committee. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



Status

- Reviewed by: TLA&I Committee, prior to ratification by FGB
- Last reviewed: Summer 2024
- Next Review: Summer 2025



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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable



C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes



Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Attendance letters 1, 2, 3 and a timeline.

LETTER 1 will be sent and logged if attendance drops below 95% (after first half term). This is a prompt letter to highlight poor attendance (below 95%) to parents. Attendance will be carefully tracked for the next 3 weeks.



LETTER 2 will be sent if absence persists. This letter refers to persistent absenteeism (below 90%). This letter will include a reference to not authorising absences without medical evidence. Parents/carers challenged as required. The child will be added to the **DO NOT AUTHORISE LIST (DNA)**



LETTER 3 will be issued if absence continues - this letter refers to unauthorised absence

1. A meeting with the Headteacher will be arranged to discuss possible escalation, EWO involvement and/or a possible SPA referral - for example: *your child's attendance is being monitored and may require the involvement of the school's Educational Welfare Officer - do you require any support with this?*
2. A school attendance contract will be agreed.
3. If the child has been absent for 5 days without notification, a CME (Child Missing in Education) letter will be sent to SPA
4. **Attendance will continue to be monitored.**
5. **UNAUTHORISED:** any absence that is not supported by a medical note



Letter 1 - Absence Monitoring Letter (below 95%)

Insert date

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Absence Monitoring

In our regular monitoring of absence, your child's name appeared as a pupil whose attendance is currently below 95%.

(Insert Child's Name) attendance is currently (insert %) for this academic year to date.

This percentage equates to (X) sessions missed. Each session represents half a day.

We would like to support you in improving your child's attendance. If the pattern of absence was to continue for the remainder of the school year, your child will have significant gaps in their learning.

It is very important that children are present for the entire learning journey.

Each morning and afternoon session counts for one attendance mark, so the possible number of attendances for children who are in school full time will be twice the number of possible school days.

We understand that most absence is due to illness but we do have a duty to inform parents of our concern if their attendance and or punctuality fall below acceptable standards.

If there are any concerns or circumstances affecting your child's attendance that we should be aware of, please ensure that you make an appointment to see [SLT member] at the earliest opportunity.

In the meantime, we will continue to closely monitor your child's attendance.

Kind regards,

Deputy Headteacher



Letter 2 - Absence Monitoring Letter (below 90%)

Insert date

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Absence Monitoring

I am writing regarding concerns with (Insert Child's Name) current attendance record. So far this academic year their attendance level is (insert %) - our school's expectation is above 97.5%.

The staff at the school work hard to ensure that children are successful in their schoolwork and regular attendance and timekeeping plays a big part in their achievement. We are bringing this matter to your attention because you may not realise how serious the problem has become.

A pupil's absence or lateness during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which you and we must seek to avoid.

We are now required to monitor future attendance to ensure that attendance improves. The school will no longer be able to authorise any absence without a doctor's certificate or note confirming the illness. This does not need to be a letter from the GP, it can be an image of dated prescription (antibiotics/prescription pain relief or similar) with your child's name on it, an emailed image of appointment text/email or an appointment card.

If there is no improvement we will have no choice but to ask you to attend a meeting with the (Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher) and the attendance team to discuss the matter.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause/him/her to receive full time education

We are confident that attendance can improve. We look forward to seeing more of your child as their attendance improves.

Please feel free to contact the school should you wish to discuss the matter further.

Kind regards,

Deputy Headteacher



Letter 3 - Absence Monitoring Follow-up Letter (below 90%)

Insert date

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Absence Monitoring

I am writing regarding concerns with (Insert Child's Name) current attendance record. So far this academic year their attendance level is low at (insert %).

The staff at the school work hard to ensure that children are successful in their schoolwork and regular attendance and timekeeping plays a big part in their achievement.

We are bringing this matter to your attention because you may not realise how serious the problem has become.

We would now like to invite you for a meeting with our Headteacher to discuss your child's attendance

Date:

Time:

A pupil's absence or lateness during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which you and we must seek to avoid. During this meeting, we will set up a School Attendance Contract.

We will continue to monitor future attendance to ensure that the level rises.

Please feel free to contact the school should you wish to discuss the matter further.

Kind regards,

Deputy Headteacher



Appendix 3: Punctuality letter.

Insert date

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: School Attendance - Lateness

I am writing to you regarding your child's lateness over the last half term. Our records show that your child has been late on several occasions.

We are concerned that your child is missing an important part of the school day when this happens.

It is our aim to work closely with our pupils, their parents and the Education Welfare Service to achieve every pupil's best possible attendance and punctuality throughout each academic year.

The following information will help you to ensure your child is at school on time every day. Our gates open at 08:35 and class registers are marked promptly at 08:45. Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed are marked as late; this will be recorded as an **L**.

Department of Education guidance states clearly that a child must not be marked present if they are not in school during registration.

We understand that mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school, they miss vital parts of their education.

If for any reason you are experiencing difficulties in getting your child to school on time, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can agree a strategy for improving this. Thank you for your continued support in these matters. I am sure we will see a marked improvement.

Kind regards,

Deputy Headteacher



Appendix 4: Absence in term time letter.

Insert date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: School Attendance - Holiday in Term Time

I am writing to you in response to your request to take a holiday in term time and include a link to our published Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy on our [website](#).

As you know, pupils of school age must, by law, attend school regularly. Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **The changes make clear that schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Our expectation is that holidays will only be taken during the 175 non-school days a year, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The removal of children from education for any reason may result in a negative impact on the pupil's educational attainment and progress. A pupil who takes ten days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. The government considers 95% attendance as being satisfactory. At Barnes Primary, we strive for 97.5% attendance for all children. Ten days' absence means a pupil will miss over 50 hours of education.

The school's policy is therefore not to authorise any leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances.

After careful consideration, your application for a leave of absence for your child **has not been granted**.

If you feel that you have no alternative but to take your child away the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' on their attendance report.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which must be avoided.

Your request therefore for your child to be taken out of school during term time has **not been authorised**.

It is our policy not to set 'catch up' or SWAYS work for pupils during periods of unauthorised absence.

Kind regards,

Deputy Headteacher



Appendix 5: School Attendance Contract.

School Attendance Contract

Name:

Class:

Date:

What is working well:

What are we concerned about:

What actions are we going to take?

Parents to sign:

Child to sign:

School to sign:

Attendance to be reviewed by the school on a daily and weekly basis.

Attendance to be reviewed by the EWO on a half-termly basis.



Appendix 5: Conversation about Attendance advice:

Start by having a 'quiet word' with parents. Approach parents personally to initiate a conversation about attendance. They are more likely to respond positively if they get the chance to talk to you in an informal way. It will also help build a more trusting, open relationship. If the first contact about attendance is an official letter home, parents might view it as a telling off and be less likely to want to talk to you about any concerns or problems. Often, the best person might not be the headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team (SLT). It is better to be someone who has a good relationship with the parents and will be seen as non-threatening. This could be the class teacher or a member of the admin team who knows the family well. It needs to be someone who is involved in monitoring attendance.

Find the right moment to approach parents:

This might be face-to-face before or after school - just make sure to give parents some privacy away from the classroom or playground, so you can chat more freely. You could offer to have a cup of tea together somewhere quiet and comfortable. Alternatively, you could phone parents to arrange a catch-up at their convenience. Be flexible about the time, to give them as much opportunity as possible to make it.

What you might say:

"I'd like to discuss Alfie, so we can work together to see what we can do to help improve their attendance. I have plenty of time now or we can meet another time if you prefer. Is that okay with you? Is there something you would like to talk about as well?"

Make sure everyone is clear on the purpose of the conversation:

It is important for parents to understand this is about the wellbeing of their child and their attendance. Show them you empathise but be clear that you need to address non-attendance, as it is not in the best interests of their child. Follow Ofsted's stance of **'listen, understand, empathise and support - but do not tolerate'** Read more in [Ofsted's report on attendance](#)

Use a gentle tone and light questioning:

You will want to ease parents into the conversation, so avoid going straight in with a direct question about why their child is not making it to school. Instead:

- Aim to **explore** how the parents feel about your school and their child - for example, are there any ongoing issues or anxieties?
- **Focus** the conversation by setting the scene about attendance and any factors at home affecting this
- Remember, questions can open or close a conversation, so choose your words carefully and offer a sense of choice - effective questions can help parents clarify or see a new possibility.

What you might say:

"I'd really like to tell you about Alfie's classwork, especially their [name a specific piece of work or project] - you would be so proud of them. I have noticed Alfie has missed a few days and has been late recently. I wondered if I can help in any way, as they are doing so well and I do not want them to fall behind by missing out. What do you think?"

Show active listening:

Make it clear that what the parents have to say is important. Send the right non-verbal messages to help parents feel at ease. For example:

- Use open body language - face the parents, keep arms uncrossed and try to relax your body
- Maintain good eye contact



- Nod and smile empathetically, where appropriate

Paraphrase what the parents say to check you have understood correctly and ask questions where you need clarification. When paraphrasing, make sure you do not add your own ideas, feelings or interpretations.

What you might say:

"Thank you for telling me all about [the issue causing poor attendance] - it really helps me understand why it has been so difficult to get Alfie into school."

Keep the conversation positive and supportive:

Build on parents' success by acknowledging what they are already doing well, such as better attendance by their other children. Use **exception finding** to reframe parents' view of the situation. For example, if their child is anxious about coming into school, ask when it is less of a challenge - is it when they have had a calm bedtime routine the night before, or a day when they can walk to school with a friend? Try **preferred futures** to help parents imagine life without the problem causing persistent absence.

For example, it could be:

- A child in year 6 setting their own alarm, getting showered and dressed by themselves, sorting breakfast, and being ready to leave either on their own or with a parent in good time for school
- A child preparing their uniform and school bag the night before school so that the morning runs smoothly
- Consider using the **miracle question** to get parents to see the benefits of helping to solve their child's attendance problem, for example:
"If something wonderful happened and this attendance problem was solved..."
- How would things be different?
- What would you do that is different? What else?
- What would you notice?
- What would someone close to you notice?"

Create a plan of action together:

- Ask if there is anything the school can do to help or suggest strategies to try. Examples might include sending a 'wake up text' to parents from your school office
- Giving the pupil a special responsibility each day, such as looking after younger pupils on the playground, to give them a real purpose to be in school
- Review the plan to make sure everyone is on board - go over what you have discussed and the actions you have agreed on. It can help you communicate empathy and clear up any miscommunications.

Further reading on improving attendance:

See our articles below for strategies and ideas to help boost attendance in your school:

[Top tips for improving attendance](#)

[Strategies to improve attendance in primary schools](#)