

BARNS GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Rationale

- Regular attendance at school is a pre-requisite of a good education. The curriculum is carefully planned assuming full attendance and therefore a child who does not attend school regularly is placed at a disadvantage and academic progress and life chances are impacted. The school recognises that it is the parents'/carers' legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school and teachers will play their part in ensuring maximum attendance of children at school.
- As a school we are committed to the idea that education is a life-long activity and thus the ethos of the school is that pupils should be happy to attend school.

Aims

- To enable maximum pupil attendance through valuing high attendance rates.
- To encourage pupils to develop habits/routines that will ensure good punctuality and attendance beyond their school days.
- To encourage pupils to take good advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly.
- To recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and work in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies to address any issues.
- To monitor the attendance of groups and individuals and communicate these with parents and carers.
- To identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and work to resolve any personal/social/academic difficulties.

Practice

- Class teachers complete a class register using the school MIS system at 9am and at 1pm. The office will contact parents by 10am on the first day of any unexplained absence.
- All parents are informed through regular communication about the importance of attendance and the impact on a child's learning if a child does not attend on a regular basis. Methods of communication include updates in the newsletter and correspondence home.
- Class teachers are expected to keep accurate records of attendance, and office staff follow up absences and refer concerns to the Headteacher. **All unexplained absences will be reported to the Headteacher, who will decide whether to authorise the absence.**
- The Headteacher regularly analyses attendance across the school using the school MIS (at least half termly) and follows a clear procedure when attendance drops:
- A conversation with individuals where attendance is of concern.
- A letter sent home to parents at least twice yearly reporting on their child's attendance. We use a red, amber and green system to explain a child's attendance and the likely impact this is having upon educational outcomes.
- Where attendance is below 90% a different letter is sent to parents informing them that this is persistent absence and outlining the impact this may have upon their child's progress and life chances. The attendance of these children is then closely monitored, and the school will work with families to promote improved attendance.

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- Where letters have been sent, and an improvement in the child's attendance is not evident, the school will discuss the matter with Pupil Entitlement Investigation (PEI). At the discretion of the Headteacher we may discuss the case with PEI (after a minimum of 10 unauthorised absences), then a referral to the PEI may be made and an PEI Officer could be allocated.
- The SBM and Headteacher will use the school's MIS system to monitor unauthorised absence, patterns of absence, lateness and absence of siblings. The SBM will manage the system to ensure records are up to date, correct codes are entered and first day contact made.
- If a child is absent without authorisation for 10 days without explanation, the PEI must be informed immediately. This will be via email in the first instance. If the absence is an unauthorised holiday, the PEI will be informed. The school will record the absence as unauthorised and monitor the attendance of that child closely. If the child's attendance is poor, the school will consider a referral to the PEI.
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006 places a statutory duty on the local authority to establish the identities of children missing education.
- If a child fails to start at school, enquiries should be made with Admissions to establish whether the child will be starting. The SBM should also attempt to contact the family. The PEI Officer should be informed by the SBM. If a Common Transfer File (CTF) has been received by the school, it should be uploaded to the S2S website.
- When a family disappears, or a child ceases to attend, for ten school days, without explanation, every effort will be made to trace the child by the school. Where the child's attendance is low, the absence unexplained or unusual, or the child is deemed to be 'at risk', immediate contact should be made with the PEI.
- Any unexplained, continuous absence of any child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan must automatically be treated as the highest priority and the duty team of social and caring services contacted immediately.
- Children can only be taken off roll when contact has been made by the receiving school and the CTF file transferred. All other reasons (disappearance, moving abroad/returning to home country) will necessitate contact and advice from the PEI.

Request for Absence:

Authorising an absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

In order to ensure clarity and fairness, requests for 'withdrawal from learning' for holidays, trips, visits, and other reasons except illness and exceptional circumstance, will not be authorised.

The school will issue a Fixed Term Penalty Notice if the criteria are met.

Punctuality

- Children are encouraged to arrive at school on time and ready for learning.
- The school gates open at 8:45 and children will be engaged in learning opportunities from the moment they arrive in class.
- When children are late, they are at risk of missing out on valuable learning time.

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- The school gate closes at 8:55 and the register is taken at 9am, lessons begin at this point.
- Children who arrive after the gate shuts at 8:55 and before the register closes at 9:00 are marked as late and given an L code. Where children are persistently receiving L codes we work with families to support any issues which may be causing this.
- Where children continue to be late they will receive a letter from the school.
- Children who arrive after the register has closed at 9am are coded as a U. Again we will work closely with parents to make them aware of the impact this has upon their child's education. If we do not see an improvement, we will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice after 10 incidents of lateness within a term.
- Children who arrive late in school after 10am, without reason, will be marked as unauthorised.

Equal Opportunities:

The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all in all aspects of school, regardless of race, faith, gender or capability. We promote self and mutual respect and a caring non-judgmental attitude throughout the school.

Review Framework:

The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance).

Appendix A

Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

Headteachers may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. The following examples of such exceptional circumstances are to be used as a guide for the Headteacher of Barns Green Primary School when considering leave of absence requests.

Before deciding whether to authorise leave of absence the Headteacher will consider:

- the impact on pupil progress
- the pupil's attendance over the academic year
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – The Headteacher should use his/her discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence - up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child – at the Headteacher's discretion.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA – as appropriate.

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- Time off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a licence being issued by Education Social Work Service.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”. This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions. Headteachers may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time.
- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however, we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when the Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations, the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

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