



Barnsbury Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

Governor Responsible:	Headteacher
Policy originator:	Admissions Secretary
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Our Values

At Barnsbury we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our pupils to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them to maximise their potential.

The school embraces the Values Education which it delivers. This encompasses all interactions in school, between pupils and staff, amongst staff and amongst pupils. We aim for our Values to show through everything that is said and done in school, encouraging pupils to fully embrace school life, enjoy learning and attend school daily

Commitment to Attendance

The staff at Barnsbury Primary School and Nursery are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

Regular attendance is key to achievement and full involvement in all areas of school life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Prioritising belonging for all pupils
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- 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
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Registers

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason (but not limited to):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Holidays
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved educational activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school in advance of the activity.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

Registration and Lateness

The school day begins at 8.30am. Morning registration will take place at 8.45am. The registers will remain open until 8.55am. Any child arriving to school between 8:45am and 8.55am will be marked as an L code, the child is present but arrived late. Any pupil arriving after 8.55am will be marked as a U code which is an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. (See Appendix 2)

The afternoon registration will be taken at 12:45pm in KS1 and 1.00pm in KS2.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the 10-minute registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Response to Pupil Absences

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school. However, if the child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedure will apply:

First day absence

The school will send an absence email to the parent via parent mail to request reason for absence by 9.20am to ensure their safety. If, there is no response from the parent by 9.30am, the school will then telephone and leave a message if no contact is made. If there is no contact by 10.00am, the school will continue to call the other contacts held on our database. The school will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised.

Subsequent days of absence

On subsequent days of absence (unless length of absence has been agreed with the parent e.g. medical or emergency situation), the school will send an email on each subsequent day of absence by 9.30am. If there is no response from the parents by 9.45am, the school will telephone the parent to request the reason for absence. The school will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. A message will be left where no contact can be made.

Ten days absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to our Attendance Advice & Intervention Officer. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Returning to school

Where a child is absent from school, the following procedure will be followed for welcoming them back. If they've been off for one day, the class teacher will welcome them back and check all is well. If they are off for a few days, further communication from the class teacher will be made and provision made for the student catching up with work. For longer term absences, a more formal reintegration will take place with a plan to catch up, some sessions may be provided where the child is given support by other agencies.

Frequent absence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

The school's Attendance Advice & Intervention Officer meets with staff on a termly basis to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

1. Stage 1 Letter sent to parents stating concerns
2. Stage 2 letter if no improvement, inviting parents in to meet with headteacher and or other staff members.
3. If no improvement, an Attendance Agreement will be put in place with parent.
4. If no further improvement, meet with Headteacher and Notice to Improve issued

5. If no further improvement, Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued and referral to Surrey Attendance Service.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and the school need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and the parent(s) will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through the school pastoral system, and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Parents will be notified by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

At Barnsbury, to encourage parents to keep attendance at a good level, a letter will be sent to parents of persistent absentees, indicating their % of attendance. If necessary, meetings with the Headteacher and the school's Attendance Advice & Intervention Officer will take place to offer support to improve attendance.

At Barnsbury, we allocate Attendance Champions to provide individualised support. We also have an attendance strategy that is based on research to support improvement in persistent absence.

Failure to Ensure Regular School Attendance

The Local Authority Inclusion Officer may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or the Attendance Advice & Intervention Officer. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Exceptional Leave of Absence

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances.

Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made, in writing, to the Headteacher who will consider the application on behalf of the Governors. Consideration will then be given to the student's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed ten school days in any one academic year.

If a leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Local Authority will be notified.

Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued.

- Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.
- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks (which may span different terms or school years). The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice.
- Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

- Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.
- If an absence exceeds 20 days, and still no contact from home, the school and local authority jointly decide whether the child can be deleted from roll.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

- If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.
- If a parent/carer has incurred a penalty notice relating to the same child/children since 19 August 2024, a rolling 3-year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.
- If two penalty notices relating to the same child/children have been incurred in the rolling 3- year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then the parent/carer will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Notice To Improve

- With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a 'Notice to Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.
- The Notice 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. In the case of unauthorised leave of absence during term time, a specific Penalty Notice warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents/carers have previously been warned through school newsletters; parent mail; or booklets, policies etc. available on the school website, that such absences would not be authorised, and that they would be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if they persisted with any such unauthorised leave of absence.

Please be aware that **each** parent is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for **each** child who incurs unauthorised absences, for example, if there are two parents and one child, each parent will receive one Penalty Notice. If there are two parents and two children incurring unauthorised absences, each parent will receive two Penalty Notices.

Surrey Attendance Service (SAS)

Our Attendance advice & Intervention Officer monitor the attendance of all children every term. When necessary, our Attendance Advice & Intervention Officer will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by the school, then the school will make a referral to the Surrey Attendance Service. The Attendance Advice & Intervention Officer will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, but unauthorised absence persists, the Attendance Advice & Intervention Officer can use sanctions such as penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2,500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Roles & Responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- Encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Offer advice to parents on illness/return times as laid out in the Health Protection Agency guidance. The recommended length of absence for illnesses varies. The Health Protection Agency offers schools guidance on infection control and a copy of this is displayed in the school office. Barnsbury Primary School and Nursery uses this guidance when advising parents of recommended exclusion time. www.hpa.org.uk

Attendance Champions

To support some identified children with improving, or maintaining their attendance, attendance champions are allocated. Their role is to:

- Build a supportive relationship with a key child, acting as their attendance mentor
- Call families to check in if a child is not in school, offering encouragement and support – this is separate to the office team role
- Welcome children back to school after absence, helping them settle back in – focus on belonging and feeling positive about being back
- Celebrate and promote good attendance throughout the school community
- Work with staff, parents, and external agencies to address barriers to attendance
- Celebrate and promote excellent attendance through school-wide initiatives, assemblies, and rewards

Parent Responsibility and The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age is responsible for ensuring that their child receives efficient full-time education suitable;

[a] To age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs. Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part (VI) Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure pupils attend school daily unless ill or for other authorised reasons as approved by the Headteacher **in advance**

- Ensure that all medical appointments are taken wherever possible outside of school hours to ensure minimal disruption to the pupils and the class teacher. If it is unavoidable then a copy of the appointment card should be shown to the office
- Ensure that pupils who are ill, receive timely and adequate medical attention when necessary and do not return to the school premises before the recommended guidance periods as highlighted by the Health Protection Agency (as above) for potentially infectious diseases or transferable illnesses or infections. The school urges parents to work in full co-operation with this guidance to keep all pupils safe and well but has the right to refuse admittance/ask for parents to collect pupils who they believe may still be infectious or unwell when returned to the school premises.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping a register of attendance for each lesson, both morning and afternoon.
- Monitor attendance patterns and raise attendance concerns with their headteacher.
- Provide pastoral support to address attendance issues.

Attendance Officer:

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Meeting with the Attendance Advice & Intervention Officer termly to identify and action any attendance concerns, including persistent absences
- Working with families to resolve attendance issues.
- Ensuring that morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date during periods one and five
- Contacting parents/carers and request reasons for absence
- Collating daily attendance records and, together with the attendance lead, puts in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality
- Monitoring and reviews the attendance policy on an annual basis
- Monitoring and reviews the attendance procedures and works with the attendance office and the Inclusion Officer to ensure reasons for absence are identified and interventions are put in place
- Identifying and monitoring attendance of persistent absence
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data, alongside the Headteacher/Attendance Champion
- 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
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer is Vicky Kruger

The Local Governing Committee:

The Local Governing Committee is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, 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 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

The Headteacher/ Attendance Champion

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
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the [deputy headteacher/assistant headteacher] to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers 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/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness
- 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/carers 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 [insert name] and can be contacted via [telephone number and/or email address].

Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance:

1. Build strong, trusting relationships with families and remove barriers early

Both the DfE and recent UK research are clear that attendance problems are rarely about motivation alone. They are often rooted in anxiety, unmet SEND needs, family stress, illness, or disengagement. Schools that prioritise *relational, supportive work* see better re-engagement than those relying primarily on sanctions.

2. Create a whole-school culture where attendance is about belonging, not compliance

Attendance improves most sustainably when pupils feel safe, valued, and included. Research and inspection evidence increasingly treat attendance as a *proxy for inclusion and school climate*, not just a percentage.

3. Use timely, intelligent data to trigger early support

The strongest schools act before absence becomes persistent. Research consistently shows that the longer a pupil is absent, the harder it is to return.

4. Provide targeted, personalised support for pupils with SEND, health or mental health needs

Post-pandemic attendance challenges are disproportionately concentrated among pupils with SEND, long-term health needs, and anxiety-related school avoidance. Universal approaches alone are insufficient.

For more information, please see our attendance strategy.

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
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

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 we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- 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

Appendix 1 – Attendance Targets

From 2012 Attendance targets are no longer statutory

However, at Barnsbury Primary School and Nursery, we continue to set attendance targets each year as a way of monitoring a consistent approach to attendance.

Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes

All students must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark. Registration will be taken by subject teachers during period 1 (am registration) and period 5 (pm registration).

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Attendance Codes – September 2025

Attendance	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority – Must be face to face learning
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity – Must be face to face learning
D	Dual registered at another school
Absence – Authorised	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school – (Where the pupil is timetabled to attend school, the absence must be recorded using appropriate schools and not code X)
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable – Including online learning
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes – Please see T Code guidance
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absence – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
These codes are classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absence – Unauthorised	
G	Leave not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Late arrival after the register is closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not yet on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure