

Barley Lane School

Hard work, humility, kindness

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 20171-8

PHILOSOPHY

Barley Lane School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all our pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognize that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

If there are any problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the students to full attendance at all times.

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage the full attendance and punctuality that underpin good or better learning progress
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimize its occurrence
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record attendance
- Will work closely with parents/carers should attendance/punctuality give cause for concern

STATUTORY DUTY OF SCHOOLS

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or carers to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

PRINCIPLES

Parents/Carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance.

Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place. Parents/Carers are required to provide the school with an explanation in the event of non-attendance. Persistent non-attendance may be viewed as a safeguarding issue as it is a child's right to attend school.

PROCEDURES

Registration Time

- 9.00am – 9.20am students arrive at school
- 9.20am – 9.30am registration at assembly hall
- 1.30pm – 1.35pm registration at assembly hall
- Concerns relating to attendance should initially be discussed with the Head teacher or school attendance officer
- Referrals will then be passed to the Education Welfare Officer
- The Education Welfare Office will select the most appropriate strategy for dealing with the issue in consultation with the school, this may include Fast Track to Prosecution, meeting with parents/carers, home visit, involvement with other agencies

Holiday and other absence request procedures

Parents/Carers

- Will note that amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave. Parents are not entitled to take their children out of school for up to ten school days per school year, which had been the previous interpretation of the legislation. The amendments now make it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Are required to complete a Request for Authorised Absence if they wish to take their children out of school. Authorisation will only be given in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Head teacher. If your child has an attendance level below 90% calculated over the previous twelve months this may impact on authorisation being given.
- All absences must be explained by a parental note or message. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence. All absence-related messages received by any member of staff will be conveyed to the school office. If no information from home is forthcoming, the school office will contact the child's parents/carers. The school office will pay particular attention to the possibility of unauthorised absence and take speedy action if this is suspected

A parent must complete an **Absence Request Form (for exceptional circumstances)** from the school office.

School will always put the education of the child first when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. In doing so, school will also take into account the child's age, stage of education, internal assessment weeks and educational progress when making a decision. It is not the

school's decision to fine parents for unauthorised absences, but is at the discretion of Devon's Educational Social Welfare Service.

It is Devon County Council policy to issue Penalty Notices or fines for unauthorised absence. Details of the implementation of fines can be found in Devon County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. Unauthorised absences may well result in the instigation of parental responsibility measures which could be a penalty notice, or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months. These Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised holidays within term time and unauthorised absence from school when the circumstances appear to have been avoidable, (e.g. child too tired after a late night, a birthday treat, family friends/relatives visiting).

Parents, pupils and staff are to be made aware of the importance of good attendance including distribution of Local Authority generated information where appropriate. Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.

- Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% may be invited in to school by the Head teacher to discuss strategies to improve their child's attendance
- Structured meetings will be held at appropriate times with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance / punctuality is a source of concern [persistent absence].
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 85% will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Role of Education Welfare Officer in Promoting Attendance

- The Education Welfare Officer will work closely with the Head teacher and Attendance Officer in order to promote positive attendance with both students and families
- The Education Welfare Officer will meet regularly with the Head teacher and Attendance Officer in order to efficiently identify concerns

Adopted: December 2015

Date of next review: December 2017

ATTENDANCE CODES

/	Present am
\	Present pm
B	Educated off-site (NOT Dual Registration)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another code/description)
D	Dual registration (student attending another establishment)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F	Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointment)
J	Interview
L	Late (before registration closes)
M	Medical/Dental Appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registration closes)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non compulsory school age absence
Y	Enforced Closure
Z	Student not yet on roll
#	School Closed to students

Pertinent school guidance

Monitoring where students are: the young people in our care can react inappropriately and impulsively. It is very important we are aware of their movements we will therefore make the following checks:

- On arrival the head-teacher and the team meet every student and make a mental note any absentees;
- At our morning meeting the register is taken by the school's safeguarding officer and clarity is sought on any late arrivals or those arriving still on public transport, those learning off-site and at work experience and any missing students;
- The register is given to the office and calls are made home to parents and carers (we must be mindful too to keep pertinent professionals typically social workers) up to speed on any unexplained absence **to ensure all absences are explained and legitimate and children have not fallen into any assumptive gap between home and school;**
- It is entirely inappropriate, totally unacceptable and highly risky to account for children using information from any other source including taxi drivers and the children themselves their sharing can contribute to our understanding but we need definitive information from parents and carers;
- If parents do not respond promptly we must persist but in the event of at least 3 attempts over a period of around 90 minutes then a note should be put in the record of this; we will have done all that is reasonable and practicable (the use of text message and e-mail are both common and useful to make contact and to record our efforts);
- In the cases of risky or vulnerable youngsters, those with a history of illegitimate absences or indeed those for whom absence is highly unusual and contact from home normally reliable we will reflect and make a judgment but it is likely and best practice to persist still until an outcome is achieved and a satisfactory reason established;
- The head-teacher or the named person deputizing for him must be alerted to these cases so a judgment can be made because if a child is unaccounted for a welfare check by Police is needed and in practice reasonably frequently we have done so.
- The school lead will then be clear about who is in school and who is not and any ongoing activity to get clarity and this will include children learning off-site.

In school staff can now reliably check any emerging absence with the school lead and identify any missing youngsters and during the school day teaching staff have five periods so there are five checks naturally occurring. These should be carried out as described below

- Teachers in each class/lesson should check that any absences from their class are authorised or explained and must be satisfied that the child is safe and his whereabouts known and approved and can do so using the school lead and walkabout support team and their walkie-talkie.
- Unauthorised or unexplained absences from class must be reported promptly to the school lead/walkabout team and teachers must be able to explain absences. **NEVER ASSUME A CHILD SHOULDN'T BE THERE: ALWAYS GET CLARITY** our young people are mercurial and unpredictable and risky.
- As children move between lessons, meetings and dispersals staff must be proactive in shepherding, monitoring and managing their movement this is absolutely essential as serious incidents frequently occur when children slip from our scrutiny.
- Similar vigilance is required around trips to the toilet and so on because two unsupervised toilet trippers can soon fall out! The intelligent and vigilant use of the support team to monitor youngsters is essential;
- We meet throughout the day in the school hall and children remain in the care of a teacher on arrival and departure and meetings led by the school lead and both should be alert to any absentees.
- The MOS leading lunch and activities must operate similarly using the school lead and support team to secure clarity about any emerging absence during those periods.
- The dispersal to taxis is led by the school lead who has from the opening of the day been informed and is aware of the day's absences and has access to the register in the office and should make a final check to ensure students are accounted for at day's end and heading for home safely.

A significant nuance in monitoring where children are is maintaining vigilance when **on off-site activities** and taking reasonable and practicable steps to supervise and monitor the children's movement and the essential and periodic **physical eyeballing and head count** to ensure everyone is accounted for throughout the trip **and critically everyone is accounted for both as you leave the school-site and at the point you return and everyone arrives safely and securely back at school.**

Another key element is to have named students attached to staff so for example a group of 12 students typically with three staff would have a named member of staff who is their "parent" for that trip and monitors and owns those named children; in this example each adult would have four named children. The trip leader throughout has responsibility for all the children and in this way underwrites his team and every child has two sponsors.