



Barnet Hill Academy  
FAITH • EXCELLENCE • KNOWLEDGE

# Attendance Policy

Oct 2024  
v7.1



## 1. Rationale

At Barnet Hill Academy, we recognise the strong correlation between attendance and achievement. The Department for Education (DfE) has provided the following statistics as an exemplar of attainment for children upon leaving KS2 & KS4:

- Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.
- Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.
- Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.
- Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.
- Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

At Barnet Hill Academy we monitor attendance and punctuality closely and work with parents/carers to ensure their pupils attendance is not a barrier to learning. Lateness causes disruption to pupil's education, both to the one who is late and the class they disturb.

The more time a child spends around other children, whether in the classroom or as part of a school team or club, the more chance they have of making friends and feeling included, boosting social skills, confidence and self-esteem.

While the parent is primarily responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, where school attendance problems occur, the key to successfully resolving these problems is engaging the child through collaborative working between the parent and the school. The school's decision will be final should attendance or punctuality problems persist and this may lead to a withdrawal of a school place for not abiding by the school's policies, namely, the Attendance Policy, which addresses punctuality matters also.

**Parents, pupils and staff are reminded that the national average for attendance is around 95%. Any attendance falling below this figure is a cause for concern. The DfE considers that any absence falling below 10% must be treated as persistent absence). At Barnet Hill Academy it is our aspiration that ALL children have a minimum attendance of 98% or above, although we recognise that there are on occasion extenuating circumstances.**

This policy must be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.



## 2. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

A pupil should come to School every day and be on time. In rare cases of absenteeism, parents must produce valid reasons for absence, which the school will use to determine authorisation in conjunction with a pupil's attendance record. Otherwise, the absence is unauthorised.

- i) A pupil should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable." Every half-day absence from School has to be classified by the School (**not by parents**), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from School for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes. Authorised absence will be granted for compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

- ii) Unauthorised absences are those that the School does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable". Unauthorised absences include:
  - Going shopping
  - Birthdays
  - Truancy
  - Holidays
  - Absences which have not been properly explained
  - Religious observance other than Eid (the school closes for Eid)

The school may report to the Local Authority any child who fails to attend regularly or has been absent 10 consecutive school days where the absence has not been authorised and/or

the reason for it is unknown. Further, any child who is absent for more than 10 consecutive days may also be removed from the school roll for non-attendance in line with the school's attendance policy. Where a pupil has a child protection plan, the school will contact social services on the first day of unexplained absence.

## 3. Procedures

### 3.1 Absences

- Class teachers take registers at 8:30am and again between 1pm and 1:30pm each school day.
- If the School does not receive a call from parent/carer by 10am on the day of the absence regarding the reason of absence, one of the school administrators makes a call to the pupil's home to verify the reason for the absence. These verbal messages are logged.
- For absences due to medical appointments, the school will require evidence of the appointments or conformation from parents. If neither is available, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- For persistent non-medical related absences (i.e. over 10% absences in any 2 week period), the parents will be required to meet the Pastoral Team.



- Parents will be informed of their child's attendance for each term through pupil reports and parent meetings. If non-medical related absence is below 93% in any 1 term, then parents may be required to meet the Pastoral Team.
- The appropriate symbols for different types of absence must be used correctly in all attendance registers.
- Class teachers are responsible for doing daily registers. They must report any concern about a pupil's absence at once to the pastoral lead.

The main office staff follow up on any absence, track attendance in every class per month, term and academic year; and analyse any pattern which will be investigated further and bring to the attention of the Pastoral Team and senior leaders the names of pupils with poor attendance (93% and below)

#### **Illness:**

- Parents are requested to keep child(ren) at home when unwell and may return when health improves.
- Parents must inform the school of any absences due to illness by 10am on the day of the absence.
- It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school explaining the reason of absence, administration team staff will contact parents where a reason for absence has not been provided.
- It is the parent and the child(ren)'s responsibility to make extra effort to catch-up on missed work.

### **3.2 Lateness**

If pupils are late due to necessary appointments or any other valid reason, parents must contact the School immediately. Persistent lateness will be flagged to the Pastoral Team and senior leaders. Parents may be required to meet the Pastoral Team or senior leaders to discuss matters of lateness and whether the School can support the family to improve the pupil's attendance.

Parents will be educated about attendance and lateness, informing them of the impact on their child/ren's education and the consequences which will follow.

Please note the School does not consider traffic as being a valid reason for lateness. However, the School does understand that on some rare occasions a road block or accident may be unforeseeable. In this case, a child's lateness will be excused for the first day only; parents/children would be expected to plan their travel time accordingly for any day thereafter to ensure they arrive to School on time.

A pupil will be expected to attend School after/before appointments. Pupils are not allowed to take the whole day off due to short appointment e.g. GP appointments



### **3.3 Communication & Informing**

- Pupils must be in their class line in the playground by 8:25am every morning. Pupils who arrive later than 8:30am must go into reception to sign in as late before entering their classroom.
- If a Pupil has a genuine reason for being late to school e.g. due to a pre-booked appointment, a letter signed by a parent should be presented. This letter can be handed in the next day if necessary.

Lateness will be monitored on a half-termly basis. A child who is late more than three times within a two-week period will be sent home a letter at the end of the fortnight, educating parents about attendance and lateness, informing them of the impact on their child/ren's education and the consequences which will follow.

- Any pupil, who has reached the stage of being sent a letter home for lateness, will then be monitored for the following fortnight half term and subsequent half-term.
- If a child is sent more than one letter home regarding their lateness, parents will be called in to meet with a member of the pastoral/senior leadership team.
- Repeated lateness i.e. 2 letters in a half-term will result in a First Warning Letter for Lateness, further letters will result in further warning letters with a Third Warning Letter in any single term may result in the matter being escalated for review and not abiding by the school's punctuality expectations and measures.

### **3.4 Meeting the Pastoral Team**

Parents must make the time to meet the Pastoral Team or senior leaders when invited to a meeting in a timely manner, which is generally considered within 5 working days. There may be valid reasons for the lateness or absence and it is the parent's responsibility to inform the School. The School will always make every effort to contact parents however if parents do not attend meetings, avoid the meeting or obstruct addressing the issue through lengthy delays then pupils may be:

- temporarily excluded or in severe cases permanently excluded
- referred to the Education Welfare Officer of the Local Authority

Discretion with how the matter is addressed in the instance of obfuscation of addressing the matter rests with the school and a decision as to how to proceed in the child's best interest will be

taken, including non-cooperation of parents/carers to address issues of attendance or punctuality.

### **3.5 Parent Communications**

In the case where parents do not answer the phone and do not respond to communications from the School, then the pupil may be temporarily excluded until such time as the parents make time to address the matter by arranging to attend the school for a meeting with one of the senior leaders.



#### **4. Holidays taken during term time**

The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances i.e. bereavement, severe medical conditions. The DfE has ruled that it is up to the Headteacher how many days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Families have no “right” to such leave. The application for leave must be made in advance by the parent of the pupil. Failure to do so may result in permanent exclusion.

The School does not allow pupils to travel during term time except under exceptional circumstances as outlined above. This needs to be agreed in advance via a meeting with the Headteacher. Families taking unauthorised term time leave may be referred to the Local Authorities which may result in fines being issued or legal action being pursued. If the absence is for a long period, for whatever reason, then the pupil/s will be taken off the School’s admission register and parents will be asked to reapply on return although there remains no obligation upon the school to readmit children removed from the school roll for such reasons.

#### **5. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- All teaching staff are responsible for monitoring the attendance of each pupil.
- The main office staff are responsible for following up on any absence and the maintenance of accurate records; and for analysing the attendance data and alerting the SLT/Headteacher to improvements in attendance and concerns about absence on a weekly, half-termly and termly basis. They are also responsible for presenting annual statistics.
- The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy annually through the safeguarding audit.
- The views of staff, pupils and parents will be taken into account to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy