



Barnet Hill Academy
FAITH • EXCELLENCE • KNOWLEDGE

Attendance Policy

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v8.0



1. Rationale

At Barnet Hill Academy, we recognise the strong correlation between attendance and achievement. The Department for Education (DfE) highlights a strong correlation between pupil attendance and academic outcomes at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4:

- Pupils who do not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at KS2 typically have higher absence rates (around 5–6%) compared to those who meet the expected standard (approximately 3–4%), and those achieving the higher standard (around 2–3%).
- At KS4, pupils who do not achieve grade 4 or above in GCSE English and mathematics have significantly higher absence rates (around 9–10%) compared to pupils who achieve grade 4+ (approximately 5–6%), and those achieving grade 5 or above (around 3–4%).
- There is a clear and consistent relationship between absence and attainment: as the number of sessions missed increases, the likelihood of achieving expected academic outcomes decreases.
- At KS2, approximately 80–85% of pupils with no absence achieve the expected standard, compared to around 35–45% of pupils who are persistently absent.
- At KS4, around 80–85% of pupils with no absence achieve grade 4 or above in English and mathematics, compared to approximately 30–40% of pupils who are persistently absent.

These figures demonstrate that regular school attendance is a critical factor in enabling pupils to achieve their full potential.

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 96%. Any attendance falling below this figure is a cause for concern. The DfE defines persistent absence as missing 10% or more of school sessions. A pupil is classified as persistently absent if their attendance falls to 90% or below. 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. Expectation and Support

At Barnet Hill Academy, we take a supportive approach to attendance, recognising that:

- Every day matters and every lesson counts
- Barriers to attendance can be complex
- Early intervention is key to preventing persistent absence
- We will work with families to identify and address barriers

Our graduated response includes:

1. Universal support - Clear communication about attendance expectations, celebrating good attendance
2. Targeted support - For pupils with emerging attendance concerns (below 95%), we will:
 - Make contact with parents to discuss concerns
 - Identify any barriers to attendance
 - Agree actions and review progress
3. Intensive support - For pupils with persistent absence (90% or below) or severe absence (below 50%), we will:
 - Hold meetings with parents to develop an attendance action plan
 - Consider referral to external agencies
 - Work with the local authority attendance team

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor attendance data termly
- Ensure the school has a clear attendance policy
- Hold leaders to account for attendance outcomes

The Headteacher will:

- Have overall responsibility for attendance
- Ensure staff understand the importance of attendance
- Make final decisions on authorising absence

The Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor attendance daily and identify patterns
- Work with families to address barriers
- Coordinate with external agencies
- Report to the Headteacher and governors

Class Teachers will:

- Complete registers accurately and on time
- Promote good attendance
- Alert the attendance lead to concerns

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure their child attends school every day
- Contact school on the first day of absence



- Work with the school to address barriers
- Avoid taking holidays in term time

4. 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.

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.

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. A pupil will only be removed from the school roll in specific circumstances as set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This includes when a pupil has been continuously absent for at least 20 school days and both:

- The school has made reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts
- The school and local authority have failed to locate the pupil

Before removing a pupil from roll, the school will notify the local authority at least 10 school days in advance. We will not remove a pupil from roll if they have a child protection plan or are looked after. Where a pupil has a child, protection plan or is looked after, the school will inform the allocated social worker on the first day of any unexplained absence. For all pupils, if the school cannot contact parents/carers and has safeguarding concerns, we will follow our safeguarding procedures, which may include contacting the police or local authority."



5. Procedures

3.1 Absences

- Class teachers must take the morning register at 8:30am and the afternoon register at 1:30pm. Both registers must be completed within the first 10 minutes of each session.
- 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.
- Where possible, parents should arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible, pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment. We may request evidence of medical appointments (such as appointment cards or letters). Absence for medical appointments will normally be authorised, but we encourage parents to provide evidence to support our records. Repeated absence for medical appointments without evidence may be queried.
- 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 (90% 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 meetings, or obstruct addressing attendance issues, the school will:

- Continue to work with the family to identify and address barriers to attendance
- Consider referral to the local authority attendance team
- Consider whether a parenting contract or education supervision order may be appropriate

In cases where there are safeguarding concerns, follow our safeguarding procedures. 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.

6. Holidays taken during term time

The Headteacher will not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account:

- The specific circumstances and context
- The pupil's attendance record
- The timing and length of the proposed absence
- The pupil's age and stage of education

Examples of what might be considered exceptional circumstances include:

- Bereavement or serious illness of a close family member
- Significant family emergencies

Parents do not have a right to take their child out of school during term time. Any application must be made in advance by contacting the school office.

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 authority, which may issue a penalty notice. From August 2024, penalty notices operate as follows:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days
- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days
- Prosecution if not paid within 28 days

Parents can only receive one penalty notice per child in a 12-month period. If a second penalty notice would be issued, the local authority will consider prosecution instead.

Penalty notices may be issued for:

- Unauthorised term-time leave of 5 or more days
- Persistent lateness (arriving after the register closes)
- Persistent absence without authorisation



7. 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