



Barnet Hill Academy  
FAITH • EXCELLENCE • KNOWLEDGE

# Attendance Policy

Sep 2020  
v3.0



## 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:

- of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve five A\* to Cs including English and maths.
- of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve five A\* to C GCSEs including English and maths.
- of pupils who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve five A\* to Cs including English and maths.

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.

Please note that where there is ambiguity and a difference of opinion or interpretation, the School's decision will be final. Also in the instance of the Principal not being present, a delegated member of senior staff will take on this role.

**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 (reduced from 15% since September 2015).**

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. 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.
- ii) 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.

iii) 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
- Looking after siblings
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Religious observance other than Eid festivals (School is always closed for Eid)

**BHA 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.**

**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

- In the Primary School, the class teachers take registers at 8:25am 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 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 Behaviour Team.
- Parents will be informed on their child's attendance for each term through pupil reports and parent meetings. If non-medical related absence is below 95% in any 1 term, then parents will be required to meet the Behaviour Team.
- The appropriate symbols for different types of absence must be used correctly in all attendance registers.
- Class teachers in the primary school are responsible for doing daily registers. They must report any concern about a pupil's absence at once to the main school office.



- 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 Behaviour Team and senior leaders the names of pupils with poor attendance (94% and below).

### **3.2 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.
- Parents must contact the school explaining the reason of absence. Administrators 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 work that has been missed.

### **3.3 Lateness**

If pupils are late due to appointments or any other valid reason, parents must contact the School immediately. Persistent lateness will be flagged to the Behaviour Team and senior leaders. Parents will be required to meet the Behaviour 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 last minute 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.

### **3.4 For the Primary School**

- Pupils must be in their classrooms at registration by 8:25am every morning. Pupils who arrive later than 8:35am 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 monthly basis. A child who is late more than three times within a month will be sent home a letter at the end of the month, 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 month and subsequent months.
- If a child is sent more than one letter home regarding their lateness, parents will be called in to meet with the Principal.

### **3.5 Detentions**

All detentions must be attended. If there is a genuine reason why a pupil is unable to attend a detention, they must inform a member of staff in reception. A parent must inform the School before the detention is due to take place, to confirm this reason.

If a detention is missed without a valid reason being provided the following will occur:

- 1st detention missed: Detention will be doubled. (If a pupil misses a 1 hour detention, this will result in her having a 1 hour detention for the next 2 weeks)
- 2nd detention missed: Parents will be called in for a meeting.

### **3.6 Meeting the Behaviour Team**

Parents must make the time to meet the Behaviour Team or senior leaders when invited to a meeting. 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 or avoid the meeting then pupils may be:

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

### **3.7 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 suspended until the parents do come to school for a meeting with one of the senior leaders of the school.

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

Principal 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 Principal 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 Principal with a fixed penalty notice (FPN) of £40 per pupil, per day to be paid before going abroad. 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.



## **5. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- All teaching staff are responsible for monitoring the attendance of each pupil at the school.
- 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 Principal to improvements in attendance and concerns about absence on a weekly, monthly and termly basis. They are also responsible for presenting annual statistics.
- The Principal 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.