

Barnsley Education Welfare

Model Attendance Policy 2024



Model School Attendance Policy

School/Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which enables them to maximise opportunities to reach his or her full potential. Research shows there is evidence of a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school make much better progress both socially and academically. Regular attendance enables pupils to adapt better to routines, schoolwork, and friendship groups. Therefore, those pupils will have a positive experience of learning and a more successful transition from primary to secondary and beyond to further education and training.

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra familial harms, including crime (the proportion of children that had been cautioned or sentenced for any offence that had ever been persistently absent was 81% and for serious violence offence was 85%).

School/Academy aims to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to strive towards every child reaching (insert own attendance target) to ensure that each child can get the best out of the educational opportunities provided.

By working in partnership with parents and other agencies, we can ensure that we have clear and robust strategies in place to manage and promote regular attendance, for all students at **School/Academy**.

School Staff to Support Attendance

The **School/Academy** strategic leader for attendance is _____

The **School/Academy** attendance officer/manager is _____.

Please contact the attendance officer on a day-to-day basis when your child is absent or for any queries regarding attendance.

The **School/Academy** parent support advisor/safeguarding & pastoral lead is _____

Attendance Strategy

School/Academy's strategy to support school attendance will follow DfE Guidance Working Together To Improve Attendance 2024: (**School/Academy** to insert whole school/trust strategy here)

Expect - **School/Academy** aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor - **School/Academy** will rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand - When a pattern is spotted by **School/Academy**, we will discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support – **School/Academy** will remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support - Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, **School/Academy** and partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce - Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, **School/Academy** will consider enforcement of attendance via the Local Authority through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

To manage and promote regular attendance School/Academy will:

- Keep parents updated on the **School/Academy's** overall attendance and individual pupil's attendance via letters home, newsletters, social media and school/academy website.
- Ensure all staff recognize and promote a whole school attendance approach and positive culture.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- Follow Public Health guidance should any local lockdowns or outbreaks in school occur.

- **School/Academy** will inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school or a child is due to become missing from education.
- Report to parents how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this via regular parent evenings.
- Build positive relationships between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. The link between attendance, attainment and wider wellbeing will be discussed with parents.
- Utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality improvement across pupil cohorts or individual pupils, to reduce persistent or severe absence from school.
- Review the attendance policy annually and publish on the **School/ Academy** website
- Account for and consider the specific needs of pupils and their families where there may be other barriers to attendance (medical conditions, mental health or special educational needs and disabilities) and provide support to overcome these barriers. (e.g. Early Help, 0-19, consideration of reasonable adjustments or referral to other wider partners)
- Support pupils back into school following a length or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation
- Monitor individual students' attendance to:
 - a) Celebrate good and improved school attendance and reward this through competitions, certificates, and events.
 - b) Notify parents when we are worried about their child's attendance by following the procedure below.
- **School/ Academy** to insert their own procedure in respect of following up absence, for example first day calling, and following up unexplained absence (e.g. visits)
- **School/ Academy** to insert their strategy to improve attendance and reduce persistent and severe absence that meets the requirements of **Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024 (DfE)**. This strategy should link to the local authorities' guidance such as Working in Partnership To Improve Attendance, Early Help Offer, and the Access to Education Guidance.

To manage and promote the regular attendance of their children, parents will:

- Understand their legal responsibilities by ensuring regular school attendance with regard to the Section 444(1) and 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.
- Understand their responsibility to keep the **School/Academy** up to date with at least 2 emergency contact details as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance 2024.
- Impress on their children the importance of regular school attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend.
- Establish effective communication with the **School/Academy** and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school so that we can work together to resolve this.
- Contact **School/Academy** on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason and when the child is expected to return. Keep school informed if the absence is likely to continue so that school and partner agencies can ensure that amendments or alternatives can be made to provision if required.
- Provide the **School/Academy** with any medical appointment cards and where possible make appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, parents should ensure that children attend prior to or following their appointment.
- Attend any meetings called by **School/ Academy** and partner agencies to discuss attendance.

In order to support schools and academies in managing and promoting regular school attendance, the Education Welfare Service will;

- Identify a key strategic lead to work collaboratively with **School/ Academy**, to:
- Support in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to improving attendance.
- Attend meetings with the **School/Academy** to identify children with irregular school attendance and develop strategies to ensure that all children can attend school regularly.
- Support the school in promoting attendance by providing advice, guidance and creation of action plans in relation to working together to improve attendance.
- Review referrals from school to address matters of poor school attendance when Early help and intervention has failed to improve attendance by:
 - a) Visiting parents' homes to undertake an assessment of need and to challenge and resolve matters of poor school attendance.

- b) Involve other agencies where appropriate, such as Public Health (school nurses) or Early Help.

In situations where all other strategies have failed to improve school attendance, the Education Welfare Service will enforce Section 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 1989, which may result in a fine up to £2,500; a Parenting Order; a community order; or a custodial sentence. Consideration will also be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice in case of unauthorised absence where appropriate (see code of conduct) and/or a Parenting Contract or Education Supervision Order.

Registration

School day start time _____

School day end time _____

Morning registers should all be completed by _____

Afternoon registers should be completed by _____

(Below is guidance and school should insert their own procedure and contact details)

Any pupils arriving after these times should report to reception so that they can be given a late mark; pupils arriving after _____ should be accompanied by a parent so that a reason for lateness can be given; the number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival.

Absences

Parents are expected to inform school of the reason for absences. However, it is school that makes the decision whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence. School will make this decision based on the information available to them. Parents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible and information such as appointment cards, medication or application for leave of absence will assist school in making this decision.

Re-occurring unauthorised absence can be referred to the Education Welfare Service and this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment. If attendance is not improving, **School/ Academy** may consider an Attendance Contract, which is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school/academy or local authority to address irregular attendance. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

Following this, **School/ Academy** can also request a Notice to Improve letter from the Local Authority. The liable parents/carers will receive a Notice to Improve which is a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 6 school weeks to affect an improvement. If the child's attendance does not improve in line with the expectations set out in the notice to improve at any time within the monitoring period, then a penalty notice may be issued in line with the new 2024 national framework for penalty notices.

Request for leave of absence in term time

The **School/ Academy** will be following the new DfE National Framework and the Barnsley Code of Conduct September 2024 when requesting Penalty Notices to be issued from the Local Authority. Further information on the National Framework can be found in Working Together To Improve Attendance 2024.

All parents who wish to take their child out of school for any reason (other than medical reasons) should complete a leave of absence request form. Penalty Notices may be requested by the school to the local authority due to the taking of leave of absence in term time without permission, or if the **School/ Academy** has reason to believe absence is due to a leave of absence and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence of at least 10 sessions in a ten-week rolling period.

It must be noticed that in line with the National Framework, the Local Authority retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold.

Penalty Notices

As detailed in the national framework for penalty notices in Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024, a penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. For example,

- **First offence** - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child payable within 21 days. This fine increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, but before day 28.
- **Second Offence (within 3 years)** - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days.
- **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)** - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child and may make an order for legal costs

Absence for participation in a performance

In these instances **School/ Academy** will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with Education Welfare Service to ensure that any performance absence is within the parameters of the law.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The Attendance Policy has a direct link to safeguarding policy; the behavior policy; anti-bullying strategies and the Health and Safety Policy.

The **School/ Academy** has also adopted the Local Authority Policies on Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education. The **School/Academy** also follows Local Authority guidance in relation to coding absence for families who travel as part of their culture.

All these policies have been endorsed by our governing body/ Academy Trust, which support the **School/ Academy** in all attempts to improve the attendance and safeguarding agenda.

Development and implementation of this policy will be considered under **School/ Academy** obligations from the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Additional information can be found at www.barnsley.gov.uk/education-welfare-service



If you wish to discuss the information outlined in this booklet, please contact any of the following team members.

Contact details

Jane Allen

Service Manager, Pupil Inclusion, attendance, and Education Welfare
Mobile: 07817624306
Email: janeallen@barnsley.gov.uk

Derek Vint

Area Manager, Education Welfare Service
Mobile: 07875308111
Email: Derekvint@barnsley.gov.uk

Jake Miller

Area Manager Education Welfare Service
Mobile: 07786525749
Email: jakemiller@barnsley.gov.uk

Rosie Smith

Area Manager Education Welfare Service
Mobile: 07702338498
Email: rosiesmith@barnsley.gov.uk