

# Barnby Dun Primary Academy

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

2017/18



## Attendance

Effective schools should be consistent in conveying their positive regard for regular attendance to parents, pupils and teachers. Children quickly pick up the message that their attendance is important.

Children are expected to attend school every day of the academic year, unless there is a very good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the Headteacher approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the Headteacher will not approve absence)

If a child is to be absent, parents should call the school on each morning of the absence stating a full and detailed reason – before 9.15am. **The Headteacher will then decide whether to authorise the absence.** If authorisation were to be refused, for instance if a child was kept off school for a birthday or a very minor ailment, then the parents would be informed.

If contact explaining the child's absence fails to be made by parents or carers, then the school would try to contact the home by telephone on that initial morning. If contact cannot be made with the person named as first contact, the school will leave a message and then proceed to try and make contact with other named people, until all possibilities have been exhausted. If a child's absence remains unexplained, especially after three days, the school would consider if support should be sought from Social Services or Learner Engagement.

A log of all messages left by parents regarding child absence and telephone conversations that staff have with parents/carers is kept on Ms K Austin's desk.

## Completing the Register

The marking of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost. However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily legal record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They also contribute to pupil's end of term reports and to records of achievement. For these reasons registers are required to be marked accurately in ink, and all alterations should be visible and explained.

- Ms K Austin, as administration officer, is responsible for inducting new staff on completing registers and reporting any concerns about the completion of registers to the Head.
- Ms K Austin/Mrs S Fenney ensure the Head is kept up to date with changing guidelines for completing registers i.e when a new code is introduced or changed.

Registers are taken promptly at 8.45am and 1.15pm, then returned to the office.

## **Leave of absence during Term Time**

Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for the purpose of a holiday, but this may be granted by the Headteacher. The school's policy for authorising holidays has to be responsive to changing Government and LA advice and was amended on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 due to changing Government legislation. It is now against the law for leave of absence to be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The government has defined 'exceptional circumstances' as:

1. Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity at all for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the organisation, i.e. a copy of the company's leave of absence policy.
2. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
3. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided, from qualified professionals, such as a doctor.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave for a family holiday, the Headteacher will consider each case individually, taking into account a child's overall attendance for the previous full year, the child's current attendance and the reason for the holiday. The school will not authorise holidays for any pupils at the start of a new academic year in September or for year 6 in April/May as this is the time for National assessments for Yr 6 pupils. **A maximum of 5 days** absence will be authorised, for one occasion only. Leave of absence forms can only be obtained via appointment with the Head Teacher.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which we, and you, must seek to avoid.

Parents are reminded of the school's policy every half term via newsletters. This is also printed on the back of leave of absence forms. All unauthorised absences taken will result in action being taken by school and possibly involve the Attendance Service. No further authorised absences will be given once an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.

## **Punctuality**

School begins officially at 8.45 a.m. (though we open doors at 8.30am) and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any child arriving later than

8.45 a.m. should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the School Office. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be recorded in the Late Book kept at the office window. The child will then be escorted to their classroom by a member of staff.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Persistent lateness will result in further action being taken, in accordance with Education Welfare advice. Three late marks in the same half term or 5+ over the year will be the trigger for contacting parents and the Education welfare officer.

## **What can parents do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is unable to attend that day.
- Talk to a member of staff when your child returns to school, to see if there is anything we can do to support their return.
- Make routine appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is absolutely necessary. If they are just a little unwell they should be in school.
- Talk to the Headteacher if your child develops any medical condition which may affect their attendance in the future. Support from the school nurse can be arranged for you.

## **Concerns procedure**

Every pupil's attendance is monitored using a R.A.G. (red, amber, green) system.

- Green, 96%+, no concerns, continue to be monitored monthly
- Amber, 94-96%, weekly monitoring in case of emerging pattern of regular short term absence, reasons for absence monitored closely, letter to parents to express concern
- Red, <94%, day to day monitoring, meeting with parents to agree action, no improvement will result in referral to external agencies.

Individual circumstances are always taken into account. A child's attendance could decrease considerably due to one genuine period of illness – i.e with chickenpox, tonsillitis, but the Head will know that it will steadily increase again over the year and not be concerned.

Absences due to minor ailments/illness, regular absences and unexplained absences are significant concerns and it is always the school's intention to identify issues and intervene early. Support is always offered and hopefully, by working together, parents and school can improve the situation. However, if this doesn't happen and the school continues to be concerned about a child's low attendance the Head will decide to unauthorise any future absence. All unauthorised absences, the 'O' code, are monitored closely by the Attendance service and this therefore, will be the trigger for involving external agencies.

The Education Welfare Officer will then begin working with parents and the school to resolve/improve the situation.

## **Giving positive messages about attendance**

We as a school try to highlight the importance of high attendance via displays, newsletters, posters around school as well as by rewarding good attendance through certificates etc.

We also try to make parents aware that there is support available through Education Welfare and the school nurse, in addition to working in partnership with school.

## **Monitoring attendance**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, delegated by the Governors, to do everything possible to ensure every child attends school for the maximum number of days they can each year. We acknowledge children are at times genuinely ill, there may be times when parents/carers request a special leave of absence for a particular circumstance i.e an exam, a family funeral, and at certain times circumstances may be such that an application for an annual holiday is made. Nevertheless all schools have a statutory duty to monitor punctuality and attendance closely for each child and if concerned, take steps to intervene early, always sharing information with parents and offering what the school and family may consider further support/advice from outside agencies.

**CR June 17**

At any time during the year this policy may be amended by the Head Teacher in light of changing Government or Local Authority advice.