

# Attendance Policy



**Date:** August 2023

**Approved by:**

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(Headteacher)  
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(Chair of Governors)

**Last reviewed on:** August 2023

**Next review due by:** August 2024

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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Please note our school gates open from 8.40am to 8.50am. Registration ends at 9.00am. It is expected that all pupils will arrive by 8.50 and register in their classrooms. An 'L' code (late before register closes) is recorded from 9.00am to 9.30am when registers fully close. A 'U' code (arrived after register closed) is recorded after 9.30am.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

We will apply this policy fairly and consistently, and always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school (in conjunction with the Deputy Headteacher)
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors (in conjunction with the Deputy Headteacher)
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils (in conjunction with the Deputy Headteacher)
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies (in conjunction with the Deputy Headteacher)
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Organising/arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Organising targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Lisa Stewart who can be contacted via the main office number on 01455 842047.

### **3.4 The designated senior leader is also responsible for**

The designated senior leader is also responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff/SLT and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- › Working with Leicestershire County Council attendance team to tackle persistent absence where relevant
- › Advising the headteacher of when fixed-penalty notices may need to be issued

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office at the start of each day and after lunch break.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Code registers according to the coding system each day and provide SLT with daily absence lists with reasons for absence
- › Follow up any unexplained absences with a text and a call (See 4.5)
- › Transfer calls from parents to the relevant staff and/or arrange callbacks, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance where relevant

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- › Communicate with the school to report their child's absence by 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and also after lunch break. This will be coded by the office staff and we will mark whether each pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open in class until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by communicating with the school office (see also section 7).

Parents/carers may call the school office (01455 842047) out of school hours and leave a voice message, or between 8.30am and 9.00am to speak to a member of the office team. They can also email the office at [admin@barwellacademy.org](mailto:admin@barwellacademy.org)

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This notification can be via a phone call, email, face to face conversation or note to the school office prior to the appointment

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Should any ongoing punctuality concerns arise, parents/carers will be contacted directly (usually by our Family Link Worker/Pastoral Lead) to discuss how we can best support sustained improvements.

### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the following steps will be followed:

- The office will call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the office cannot reach any of the pupil's parents/carers, initially a message will be left, requesting them to call school to explain the absence as soon as possible
- If by 9.45am there has been no return call, the office will inform our Family Link Worker/Pastoral Lead, who will call again. Should there be no contact made that morning, school will consider the known circumstances and may need to take further steps to ensure pupil safety which may include a home visit or contacting external agencies. (DHT will be informed by lunchtime by the Family Link Worker/Pastoral Lead if no contact has been made.)
- Once the reason is ascertained, school will identify whether the absence is approved or not
- The office team will identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- The office will call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels for example, as part of our written school reports and via half termly texts. Attendance will also be discussed, especially if there are any concerns, at parent meetings with class teachers and as part of our termly 'Team Around the Child' meetings that review SEND provision and progress.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. As examples, these reasons do not include:

The reduced cost of holidays

Awkward flight times

Parental work patterns

Weddings – at home or abroad

Other family members booking holidays who are ignorant of school term dates

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or downloadable from our website (See appendix 3). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school we have aspirations for every pupil to have 100% attendance and are committed to working closely with families to support this. We celebrate attendance by ensuring that parents/carers receive messages of praise via the school office to share with their children. Having said this however, we are also very aware that, due to family circumstances or genuine illness/medical needs, attending school is not always a 'choice' that the child, or family, can make and are determined not to cause upset to our pupils who have not managed to achieve 100% attendance.

## 7. Attendance and absence monitoring

The overall responsibility for the monitoring of this lies with the Deputy Headteacher (Mrs Lisa Stewart.) At an individual level, absence is monitored daily as explained in 4.5 above. We will apply this policy fairly and consistently, and always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance and absence

The Deputy Headteacher will

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily (as explained above in 4.5 unexplained absence), monthly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children or individuals whose absences may be a cause for concern

#### **What happens if we have a concern about a child's attendance?**

As a school we have different levels of support. Although there are stages to our procedures, we recognise that we need to take an individualised approach to removing barriers and it will not always be used in a hierarchical manner. However, we also recognise the need to increase our level of challenge where attendance is not improving, despite our support.

Procedures to support improvement (See Appendix 2 for visual representation)

**Step 1** – Contact will be made with parents/carers by phone to share our concerns and to find out how we can possibly support improvement.

**Step 2** – A letter will be sent to the family to inform them in writing of what their child's attendance is and again offer any further assistance.

**Step 3** – Medical evidence requested in order to authorise future absences due to illness

**Step 4** – A meeting will be requested to discuss attendance concerns and to agree a support plan/parenting contract. This will set out what school, parent and pupil agree to do and the improvements we hope to see, with agreed time frames. This stage may include contact with external agencies and/or signposting parents'/carers to additional services for support too.

**Step 5** – If we feel we have exhausted all avenues within school to improve attendance, we will liaise with the Local Authority. Please note that this may, in turn, lead to legal action.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance and absence

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address any identified patterns

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Deputy Headteacher will:

- Provide regular attendance reports/information to class teachers and school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families where relevant
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find any patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Communicate regularly with and hold regular meetings (where suitable) with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Where pupils are persistently or severely absent, our Family Link Worker and/or Pastoral Lead will work closely with relevant families to support them in identifying what barriers may be preventing school attendance and work together to reduce or eliminate them, to enable their children to attend
- Where parents and school agree, parenting contracts may be drawn up as part of a transparent and supportive approach. These will be regularly reviewed during an open discussion between the family and the school
- Throughout any concerns over attendance, communication will be maintained and this may be face to face, via email, telephone and/or letter

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Deputy Headteacher (Mrs Lisa Stewart). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

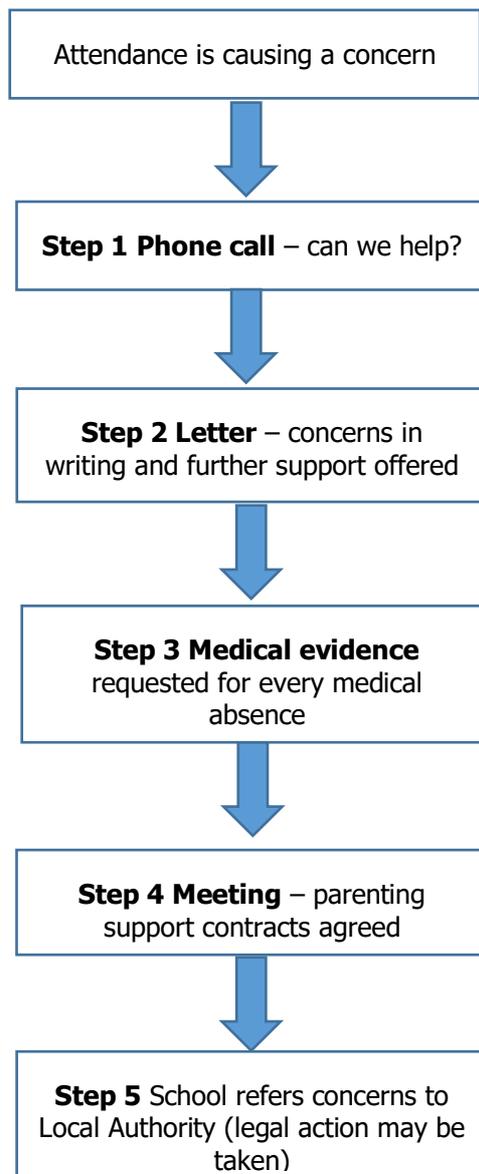
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: Visual representation of procedures to support improvement



## Appendix 3: Copy of absence request form.

[Click here for pupil absence form request](#)

Appendix 3: Copy of absence request form.



**BARWELL CHURCH of ENGLAND ACADEMY**



**APPLICATION FORM for PUPIL ABSENCE in TERM TIME**

Please complete this form and return it to school.  
The Headteacher can only consider requests where there are particular and exceptional circumstances that require your child to be out of school during term time.

Child's Name

Child's Class

Dates when absence from school is requested

Number of school days absence

Please give details of the exceptional circumstances that require your child to be out of school during term time

Signed (Person with parental responsibility for the above named child)

Date