

Attendance policy

2025 - 2026

Approved by: Barnhill Local Governing Body

Last reviewed on: September 2025

Next review due by: September 2026

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance	4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	6
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	7
7. Attendance monitoring	7
8. Monitoring arrangements	8
9. Links with other policies	8
Appendix 1: attendance codes	9

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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the statutory [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](#)

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
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors ›
Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › 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
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers ›
Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is deputy head teacher for behaviour and attitudes and can be contacted via attendance@barnhill.school.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is 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 and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher/deputy headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on to the school MIS each lesson.

3.6 School office and attendance staff

School office and attendance staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers and pupils to the head of year/pastoral support manager or attendance office in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:00 or as soon as possible thereafter 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
- Sixth form pupils are expected to attend every timetabled session.

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 once during the second session. It will mark whether every 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 registration class by 08:20 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:25 and will be kept open until 9:55. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 14:20. Any student who comes in after the register closes get a U code which means they have 0% attendance for that session.

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 08:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school, notifying via the attendance email address or emailing that address via edulink. (see also section 7).

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

Where the absence is longer than 2 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 in advance.

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.

Parents should notify the school by calling the school, notifying via the attendance email address or emailing that address via edulink.

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

If a pupil is late to school, there will be a detention where the student can speak to a member of staff about any issues they may have- If the student fails to attend this detention, then it will escalate in severity and time.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Parents and carers will be notified via truancy text/call if their child is absent without explanation. If this message is not responded to, a phone call will be made. If the safeguarding of a child is at risk the police and social agencies will be contacted according to the school's safeguarding policy.

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

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- 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
- 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/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via reports for all pupils, but for those whose attendance is a concern by phone call, letter and invitation to meetings at which the pupil's attendance will be discussed.

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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances beyond reasonable expectation.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school's website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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
- To attend a funeral for a relative or friend absence may be authorized for the duration of the funeral only.
- Study leave

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

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

The school will make every attempt to contact the parent or carer by telephone and in writing. In the first instance we would invite them to discuss attendance unless the absence relates to leave in term time without permission. Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

A referral may be made to the LA under the following circumstances based on the national framework for penalty notices:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of ten sessions (usually equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling ten school week period. This may span different terms or school years This will include unauthorised absence for lateness Code U.
- A term time holiday taken without permission would count towards the ten sessions.
- A national limit of two penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period. At the third (or subsequent) offence(s) other legal prosecution will be considered.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent or carer for each of their children for example two parents with three children would receive a total of six penalty notices, one parent with two children will receive a total of two penalty notices.

From September 2024 each penalty notice is £80 if paid in the first 21 days, from days 22 to 28 the fine doubles to £160 for each penalty notice.

For the second offence issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 for days 1 – 28, with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

The Attendance Support Team has asked us to point out that it is not possible to pay these fines by instalments or lower the cost when they have increased, or to simply fine one parent.

Payment can be made online and instructions on how to pay are included on the penalty notice letter.

If a penalty notice is not paid or the Attendance Support Team assesses that that the level of absence warrants court action, the local authority will arrange for a court hearing.

There are a range of sentencing options available to the magistrate including the maximum penalty of a fine of up to £2500 per parent for each offence as well as the possibility of up to three months in prison.

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

Barnhill Community School understands that promoting good attendance is important- ways in which this is completed are:

- Certificates- end of term rewards
- Badges
- Attendance Prizes for 100% Attendance at the end of a term/academic year form competitions between form groups and that include prizes
- Display attendance for each year in their form classes Praise during assembly
- Assemblies where the important of attendance is discussed
- Attendance breakdown for each year/form in all online communication to parents/carers/guardians

7. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

- Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health
- If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will arrange a home visit to check the pupil's welfare.
- If no one is at the property, we will consider involving Police Safer Schools Officer
- If after visiting/contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. If the pupil off for 10 days we will refer them to Children Missing Education
- The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- Pupil-level absence data is collected each term 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.

- All pupils with attendance lower than national average will be reported to the Attendance support team team (Hillingdon council)
- Pupils with concerning attendance will be discussed weekly at a strategy panel- with senior members of staff and the safeguarding team to ensure all that can be done for the pupils and their family are.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term 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

- › 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 these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

- › Provide regular attendance reports to the deputy headteacher, attendance officer, heads of year ,raising achievement leaders and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › 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 patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers 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
- › Parents and carers will be contracted to attendance meetings for those children whose attendance is a concern.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the deputy headteacher. 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.

Attendance Codes – September 2024

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure