



**Barrow CEVC  
Primary School**  
Inspire, Create, Discover, Together

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www.barrowcevcprimaryschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs H Ashe BA (Hons)



13th September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Absence & Penalty Notice Guidance 2023-2024**

We recognise that regular attendance at school is an essential feature of the excellent achievement of our children here at Barrow. We are delighted that almost all of our parents are very diligent in ensuring that their children attend school regularly and overall our absence levels are above the national average. We do, however, continue to try to secure good attendance and reduce the number of days of absence for all children across the school.

Government statistics show that primary schools allow twice the amount of time off for holidays than secondary schools do. If children are taken away for a two week holiday every year and have an average number of days off for sickness and appointments, then by the time they leave at sixteen they will have missed a whole year of school! Although the number of days lost through agreed family holidays has been falling, the number of unauthorised family holidays has risen nationally – especially in primary schools. Under such circumstances, where the request for absence has been declined, the law provides schools with the right to impose penalty notices.

There are very limited reasons for schools to grant leave during term time. Absence during term time for holidays is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance. Term times are for education and so we prioritise attendance at Barrow School, particularly as children and families have 175 days off school a year to spend time together. Our default policy at Barrow School is that absences will not be authorised during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Current legislation means that penalty notices can be issued for any unauthorised absence for children of statutory school age. **The policy of the Barrow Governing Body is to issue penalty notices for periods of absence totalling 8 or more sessions (4 days).** This can be when accrued on consecutive days of absence or when a total of 8 or more sessions is reached at any point during the year. Please see the attached guidance which provides you with more detailed information regarding penalty notices. Further information and guidelines from Suffolk County Council is available on their website <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/education-and-careers/pupil-welfare-and-support/school-attendance-penalty-notices/>

I do appreciate that this course of action is likely to apply to only a small number of the school's families, however, I am required to inform all parents that such action is a possibility. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, then please do contact me and I will be happy to address your queries.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Helen Ashe  
Headteacher



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### **Attendance Reminders for Parents**

1. Please take families holiday during the school holidays. Holidays in term time will be fined at a cost of £60 per adult, per child.
2. Please call in before 10 am if your child is not going to be at school. It saves us having to call you!
3. If your child is regularly off due to illness, we will call you for a meeting to see how we can help.
4. Absence due to illness can be unauthorised if we suspect your child is well enough to come to school or not ill at all.
5. If your child comes into school after 9am the registers are closed and it counts as 1 session of unauthorised absence (there are 2 sessions in each school day).
6. Too many unauthorised absences will result in a fine or a referral to our School Attendance Support Officer at Suffolk County Council.
7. If your child has a medical appointment, please give school a copy of the appointment so that we can authorise the absence.
8. If you know there is an unusual or unexpected reason for your child's absence, please talk to us ahead of time (if possible). We may agree to authorise the absence.
9. 90% - or below - is poor attendance
10. If you or your child have any worries about what's happening or has happened in school please bring your child in to school and talk to us about it. Do not give your child a day off.