

Barrow CEVC Primary School

Inspire, Create, Discover, Together

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Attendance Policy

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1. AIM

The aim of Barrow Primary School's Attendance Policy is to provide an environment which encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parent, pupils and all School staff.

For a child to reach their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Children Families and Schools.

Within each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set challenging attendance targets. These will reflect both national and local trends and expectations.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular termly intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

2. PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually.

Section 444 of the Act says:-

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence"

(NB Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")

Absence through sickness or unavoidable cause

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's absence. This should be by telephone on the first day of absence. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Term time absence for a family holiday

The Education Regulations 2006 formerly allowed Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to eight school days leave per year. Head teachers could also grant extended leave for more than eight school days in exceptional circumstances. September 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for family holidays during term time.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007

Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time and for **any** unauthorised absence from school. Parents must, **from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days for** any unauthorised absences after 8 sessions. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Please refer to supplementary document from Suffolk County Council entitled 'Penalty Notices: Information for Parents and Carers'.

Whilst it might generally be considered that a holiday is good family time, a child's right to a full time education must take priority. It is now well recognised that children with high attendance perform better in SATs and achieve higher grades at GCSE. It should be noted that a pupil who takes 10 days holiday a year during term time will achieve only 94.7% attendance if there are no further absences. Furthermore, a pupil who otherwise has an attendance level of 95% will have this reduced to only 89.7% by taking 10 days holiday in term time, and a pupil who generally attends 92% of the time will have this reduced to 86.8%. Neither of these attendance levels is acceptable and will reduce the likelihood of those children reaching their potential in SATs and future GCSE examinations.

Suffolk Local Authority does not support term time holidays other than in the most exceptional circumstances and schools have been reminded that every request for absence for such holiday will be considered on its merits. Holidays taken without prior permission should be recorded as unauthorised absence and reported to Suffolk County Council's Attendance Service.

We only have the children in school for 38 weeks out of 52; it should be most unusual for parents not to find time for their annual holiday in the 14 weeks available.

Parents will be asked to write to the Head teacher in advance to request for holiday during term time.

Persistent Absence or Action for Low Attendance?

96%+	Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic
94- 95%	Strive to build on this. Work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 96%+
85- 93%	Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School contact parent directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance.
Below 85%	Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Attendance Service - Education Welfare Officer [EWO] Penalty Notice considered where absence is not authorised.

The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register, in the case of

1. a child accumulating a series of absence codes
- or
2. Children that have an attendance of less than 85% will trigger a series of actions;

Step 1: Parents are sent a warning letter, informing them of their child's attendance percentage.

Step 2: Parents that site persistent recurrent illnesses as a reason for absence from school will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences from school; this can be in the form of: doctor's appointment card, prescription slip, medication administered by the doctor. Any absences on grounds of illness that do not have the supporting evidence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Step 3: A meeting will be arranged between school, parents and the School Nurse to discuss health issues and discuss future strategies to attend school regularly.

Step 4: In the event of continued absence without medical evidence the Headteacher reserves the right to issue a fixed penalty notice for each parent per child.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

b) Prior to the engagement of the EWO, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

Guide for Parents

Attached as Appendix A is a Guide for Parents, which may help to answer some important questions. A separate leaflet is also available on the school website for parents entitled 'A Guide for Parents on Attendance at school'.

3. PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

4. SCHOOLS' RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff at Barrow School will provide an ethos which places high value on regular attendance and good punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have a good attendance by:-

- Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately;
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the school can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies authorising absence);

- Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care;
- Contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupils absence, and recording the contact;
- Consulting Suffolk County Council's Attendance Service if a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern;
- Promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school);
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils, classes or tutor groups;

In addition, schools are required to produce written home-school agreements, which include clear understandings about attendance and punctuality.

The school is committed to improving levels of attendance and an Attendance Action plan will be developed each year detailing key areas for improvement.

5. KEY ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

(from Attendance Action Plan)

A challenging target of at least 96% has been set for attendance for each academic year this will take yearly attendance levels above the national average. To achieve this, reductions should be made in the levels of both authorised sickness and unauthorised absence due to term time holiday.

Raise the profile of the importance of good attendance with parents including implementation of a new illness policy giving clearer guidance to parents and staff on time off for particular types of sickness i.e. reducing the exclusion period for non-viral sickness from 48 to 24 hours.

Thorough tracking and monitoring of attendance and levels of sickness; medical evidence to be requested in order to authorise the illness of persistent absentees i.e. below 85%. Early warning letters to be issued to parents of those children whose attendance is below 90%. Attendance review to be completed every half term when the admin staff collate the data for the Local Authority Persistent Absence return deadline.

In cases where children are repeatedly arriving to school late, tiered early warning letters have been formulated to inform parents that there is help available from the school's pastoral team to assist with routines and strategies to ensure children are in school, prepared and ready to start the school day in a positive and alert manner.

6. GUIDE FOR SCHOOL STAFF

A guide for School Staff Appendix B is attached.

7. APPENDIX A - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at 8:55am and the afternoon register at 1.00pm.

What if my child is late?

Registration finishes at 8:50 for KS2 and 8:55 for KS1 in the morning and at 13:00 in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between 8:50 or 8:55 (depending on KS) and 9.00 he/she will be marked as **late**.

If your child arrives after 9.00 he/she will be marked as **unauthorised**.

If your child arrives between 13:00 and 13.30 he /she will be marked **unauthorised**.

If your child arrives after 13.30 he/she will be marked **unauthorised**.

Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular attendance.

Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should, wherever possible, be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time, you should complete an application form, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Head teacher will not authorise the absence and your

child will be recorded as unauthorised absence. 8 sessions of unauthorised absence from school will incur a fixed penalty fine.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Educational Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Western Area Attendance Service is based at:

Children & Young Peoples Services
West Suffolk House,
Western Way,
Bury St Edmunds,
Suffolk
IP33 3YU
Tel: 01284 758610

8. APPENDIX B - A GUIDE FOR STAFF

Registration

Calling of the registers:

- Classroom teachers are responsible for attendance registers (a list of recommended register codes is attached)
- Registers will be called promptly by 8:50 or 8:55 depending on the KS and 13:00 by all teachers
- Registers will be close at 8:50 or 8:55 and 13:00
- If a pupil fails to arrive before the close of registration, he/she will be marked absent
- Pupils who arrive late, but before the close of registration, should report to the office where they will sign the late book

Who will amend the register?

- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed should report to the school office and sign the late book; the admin officer will amend the registers to indicate lateness.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed should report to the school office and again sign the late book indicating time of arrival. If an acceptable explanation for the late arrival is not received from the parents the register will show an unauthorised absence.

Monitoring Procedures

- Attendance registers will be collected half termly by the Head teacher for monitoring purposes.

Weekly Totals

These are completed on a weekly basis by the admin staff.

Authorised/Unauthorised

Providing an explanation is received, an absence can be authorised for:-

- Illness
- Dental/medical appointments
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Exceptional special occasions, e.g. family wedding
- If the pupil lives more than 2 miles away from the school and the local education authority has failed to provide transport when they are required to do so.
- Attending a Pupil Referral Unit

- Participation in an approved public performance
- The pupil's parents are Travellers and they are known to be travelling at the time of absence.

It will remain unauthorised:

- If no explanation or unsatisfactory explanation is received from parents
- For looking after siblings
- For shopping trips
- For unexceptional special occasions, e.g. birthdays
- For family holidays

If staff are unsure how to mark a particular absence they should consult with the Head teacher.

Keeping of notes

- Absence notes should be kept in the pupil's blue folder in the locked filing cabinet in the school office. These notes should be filed by the Administration Team.

Following up absences

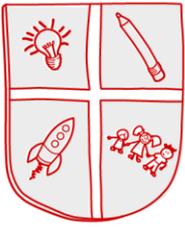
- Rapid responses are essential if there is no contact from the parent
- In cases where there is doubt about an explanation received, contact should be made with the parent

Strategies employed to support pupils and parents

- On a daily basis the Admin Assistant goes through the registers between 9.30 am and 10.00 and any absences are noted. If no reason is available a phone call to the home will be made. Copies of all calls must be logged
- If a pattern of concern regarding attendance is developing the class teacher will, after consultation with the Head teacher, contact the parents and invite them into school to discuss attendance
- If there is still no improvement, the Head teacher will contact parents and invite them to attend a meeting.
- Once point 3 is reached the Educational Welfare Officer should receive copies of all previous attempts made.

Support for pupils who have difficulties attending school

- Where pupils are absent with good reason (for example because of exclusion or long term illness) a member of staff will coordinate meaningful work to be sent home and will ensure it is marked on a regular basis
- When pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised, return they will be welcomed back to the school and a reintegration programme agreed



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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Part A :- SCREENING EIA							
General Information							
1. Title of the policy or practice being assessed:							
Attendance Policy							
2. Aim(s) of the policy or practice being assessed:							
The aim of Barrow Primary School's Attendance Policy is to provide an environment which encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives.							
3. Type of policy or practice being assessed:							
Existing				Proposed			
✓							
4. Name of person responsible:							
For the policy or practice				For completing this EIA			
Mrs Jo Woodland				Mrs Jo Woodland			
5. Which members of our school community are affected/likely to be affected by the policy or practice?							
Pupils	Staff	Parents and carers	Governors	School volunteers	Visitors to the school	Other –	
✓	✓	✓					
6. Does or could this policy have a negative impact on any of the following?							
Age	Disability	Gender	Gender identity	Pregnancy or maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sexual orientation
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Undertake a full EIA if any answer is 'yes' or 'not sure'.							
7. Does or could this policy help promote equality for any of the following?							
Age	Disability	Gender	Gender identity	Pregnancy or maternity	Race	Religion or belief	Sexual orientation
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Undertake a full EIA if any answer is 'no' or 'not sure'.							
Any adverse impacts are explored in Part B :- the Full Impact Assessment below.							

Part B :- FULL EIA

1. Identify the aims of the policy and how it is implemented.

-
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2. Assessment of impact (with regard to protected characteristics)

Protected Characteristics	Assessment of impact	Consideration of alternative measures or adjustments.	Consultation	Data to support the Assessment
Age				
Disability				
Gender				
Gender identity				
Pregnancy or maternity				
Race				
Religion or belief				

Sexual orientation				
3. Monitor for adverse impact in the future				
➤				
➤				
➤				
4. Publication of results of the impact assessment				
➤				
➤				
➤				

Part C :- EIA ACTION PLAN					
Actions recommended as a result of this impact assessment.					
Issue/Objective	Action required	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications	Comments