

# Barrs Court Primary School

## **Attendance Policy** (Statutory Document) Version No 1 September 2021



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<b>Date approved by Staff</b>	September 2021	
<b>Committee Responsibility</b>	<b>Name of Committee:</b>	<b>Date of Approval:</b>
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## Attendance Policy

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY BARRS COURT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

We aim to provide each child with a high quality learning experience, developing their potential and encouraging independence and confidence.

If our pupils are to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them, good attendance and punctuality are essential. Regular attendance demonstrates a commitment to learning and the school community and is linked to children's well-being and safety.

Staff, governors, pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Officer will work together to implement this policy.

To promote high standards of attendance and punctuality throughout the school, we will:

- Maintain procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality
- Reward good attendance
- Maintain clear registration systems for class teachers
- Ensure clear procedures to distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence and late registration
- Ensure effective referral systems when a problem is identified, involving external agencies where necessary.

#### **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Our pupils have the right to an education. Regular attendance and punctuality at school are essential:

- if pupils are to make good progress in their work
- if pupils are to develop to their full potential
- if pupils are to develop the discipline in school to prepare them for adult life.

The effects of missed schooling will often be:

- learning affected and potential not reached
- disrupted work
- difficulties forming relationships and settling into groups

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS**

Parents/Carers of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Parents should:

- ensure their children attend school regularly. This is a parent's legal responsibility.
- as far as possible arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- not book family holidays and visits during term time.
- discourage absence for minor ailments.
- discuss any issues preventing the child from attending school with the class teacher or headteacher, rather than keeping their child at home.
- help to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- follow school procedures for reporting absence, including telephoning the school office on the first morning of illness.
- ensure their child arrives at school on time.
- ensure that their child is signed in at the school office if they arrive late.
- ensure that their child is signed out at the school office if leaving school early.
- ensure that their child is signed in and out at the school office when leaving and returning from appointments.

If their child is unavoidably absent from school, parents should:-

- Contact the school - telephone on the first morning of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.
- Apply to the headteacher, in advance, for permission for leave of absence
- Be aware that any unexplained absences are recorded as unauthorised and are recorded on school reports.
- Be aware that time off school for visits to relatives, shopping or long weekends will not be authorised and if taken will be recorded on their school record.
- Be aware that if a child arrives at school after 9.20am this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

## Attendance Policy

The Education Act 1996 states that if any child of compulsory school age registered at a school fails to attend regularly, his/her parent/carer is guilty of an offence.

### RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL

**Attendance registration.** We have a legal duty to register all pupils in the attendance register in the morning and afternoon. We will code according to national guidelines. Where there is a pattern of absence and no clear supporting evidence of acceptable reasons for absence we will mark these as unauthorised. (See ` health and attendance `)

**Punctuality.** Our policy is that we will allow a pupil who is late arriving by up to 20 minutes from the start of registration to be marked as "Late" in the attendance register. We believe that a pupil arriving late will not receive the best outcomes. Arriving late can be unsettling for the pupil and may cause classroom disruption. Pupils who arrive persistently late may be (Schools to INSERT sanction) and parents or carers will be contacted by (School to INSERT contact name)

Pupils arriving after 20 minutes from the start of attendance registration will be marked as (U) in the register. This has a meaning of an absence which is unauthorised. A pattern of unauthorised absence U code may lead to formal action for non-school attendance and a possible Penalty Notice fine.

### Health and Attendance

Where illness is a clear reason for a pattern of absence with supporting information (for example repeat reference to medical aspects by young person, parent carer, prescription information, medical appointment cards, information from other health professionals) we will put in place an Individual Health Care Plan in line with the South Gloucestershire Council Medical Needs Policy.

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Medical-Needs-Policy-December-2016.pdf>

Where there are occasional absences such as for sickness and diarrhoea there is no requirement for medical supporting information. For repeat absences we will follow government guidance and agree to absences where there is appropriate medical supporting information.

#### Class Teachers

- Take register promptly and accurately in the morning and afternoon. Register is taken at 9am. Children arriving late are recorded as Late (L). Those arriving after 9.20am will be recorded as Unauthorised (U). **Unauthorised sessions can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.**
- Take any opportunity to request a reason for absence from the parents, when reasons are not provided.
- Note reasons for absence (if told by parent) and record in the register.
- Discuss any concerns with the school's administration officer, who will if necessary, notify the Educational Welfare Officer if appropriate.
- Encourage pupils who are trying to improve their attendance.
- Notify parents promptly of any concerns regarding attendance.

#### School Office

- Provide all parents with a copy of the school's Attendance Booklet.
- Attempt contact with parents on the first day of any unexplained absence to establish the reason (by 9.45am if no message received from parents).
- Note reasons for absence with the correct letter in register and record whether it is authorised or unauthorised.
- Monitor attendance and alert staff of any concerns. Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the school and letters sent to parents/carers.
- Keep a record of each academic year's register for the following three years
- **To ensure registers are accurate and apply the standard recommended coding by South Glos LA, which is in accordance with DfE guidelines for reasons of absence.**

#### Headteacher

- Keep a record of each academic year's register for the following three years.
- Meet with the school's EWO to discuss pupils with difficulties with school attendance.
- Provide badges for those pupils who have 100% attendance

## Attendance Policy

### School Governors

- Review and update the Attendance Policy.
- Monitor attendance figures.

### THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OFFICER IN THE SCHOOL

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If the problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) from. The Educational Welfare Service is available to provide specific services to encourage good school attendance and allow pupils to benefit fully from the educational facilities available to them.

- Regular monitoring of registers.
- Regular meetings with the school to discuss and advise on problems related to attendance.
- Agree on action to be taken by the school and/or the Education Welfare Service.
- Liaise and make referrals with other agencies as appropriate.
- Feedback and exchange information in relation to work that has been undertaken by the Education Welfare Officer and/or the school.
- Under certain circumstances it may be necessary for legal action to be taken for non-school attendance.

### SCHOOL RESPONSES TO ABSENCES

The law requires all schools to indicate in the register whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

If a child is expected at school but does not arrive, attempts will be made to contact the parent on the first morning of absence.

#### Authorised Absence

Authorised absence means that the Headteacher has either given approval beforehand for the pupil to be away, or that the explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification.

After an absence, even if the school receives a note, telephone call or personal contact about an absence, it is not obliged to accept that as a valid reason for absence. Only the Headteacher, within the context of the law, can authorise absence, not the parents. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the explanation or receives no explanation at all, the absence has to be treated as unauthorised.

Accurate use of register codes within the school will allow the teachers and Educational Welfare Officer to determine quickly the basis of the authorised absence in question.

Authorised absence that may be approved:

- Funeral, wedding of a close family member
- Medical absence for Hospital/Dental appointments (non-urgent routine check-up appointments should be made after school hours or during school holidays). Children are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school.
- Illness. Children are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some children will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support children in these circumstances to minimise the impact on their education. When a child is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, an attendance meeting will be called.
- Religious Observance
- A child excluded from school for a behaviour-related incident

#### Unauthorised Absence

##### Absences which are not agreed by the school

The 1996 Education Act requires parents and carers to ensure children attend school regularly and punctually. Where patterns of absence or broken weeks have been identified and where there are unauthorised absences we will seek to engage with parent/carers and the young person. Where efforts to address attendance do not lead to a reduction in unauthorised absence, consideration will be given to a formal legal process.

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The School is not able to authorise absences for repeated long weekends, shopping etc. and these will be recorded as unauthorised absences.

When no satisfactory explanation is received or the pupil has truanted, an unauthorised absence is recorded.

All unauthorised absence is regarded as truancy by the Government and will be entered on pupil's individual school reports.

Unauthorised absence that will not be approved:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Looking after family members
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Arriving after 9.10am

### Holiday Absence

In line with changes to the law implemented in 2013, **no** holiday will be authorised in term time. Leave of absence is not to be authorised unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Exceptional circumstances are

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Once in a lifetime experiences e.g. When a family need to spend time together to support each other during/after a crisis

### Penalty Notices

In cases where parents or carers take their child on holiday during term time we will follow the Code of Conduct and request that a Penalty Notice is issued by the local authority where applicable. Where all or almost all unauthorised absence marks are U coded (late after registration) we will first seek to engage with parents/carer and the young person. If U code absences persist we will request a Penalty Notice in line with the Code.

**Any unauthorised leave of 5 days(10 sessions) may result in a penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.**

### Procedures

- a) The admin officer will monitor attendance producing termly reports to the Headteacher and will notify the Headteacher if any absence falls below 96%.
- b) Absence will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met
- c) Staff will be alert to critical times such as a return after a long period of sickness or a traumatic event, and will ensure that the child is supported appropriately.
- d) Following a period of extended absence staff will show flexibility in reintegrating the child into the school community. This reintegration may be on a phased basis, and arrangements will be made in consultation with parents and other professions as appropriate.
- e) The school will provide proactive strategies for working with individual pupils or groups of years to promote good attendance. In cases of poor attendance the Headteacher or EWO will set improvement targets in consultation with the parents.

## Attendance Policy

### Engaging with parents and carers.

We believe regular attendance is so important in ensuring best outcomes for our pupils that we will review our attendance performance each term. We will regularly look at the pupils where there is a pattern of absence. Where a child has a pattern of Broken Weeks we will contact parents and may arrange to meet and review progress. There is clear national evidence that children who are in receipt of free school meals attend less than other pupils. We will ensure that support to ensure attendance of all pupils who are in receipt of free school meals is prioritised.

Parents will be invited to an attendance meeting where attendance gives cause for concern:

1. Where there are five broken or incomplete weeks in each old-style term (Autumn, Spring, Summer). A broken week is one where there is at least one late or absence mark in the register.
2. Where attendance is below 95% over a term
3. Where there have been repeat late or U code marks with or without other attendance concerns

At the meeting, the impact of missed learning will be discussed as well as investigating reasons for absence and solutions. New attendance targets will be set.

If repeated termly attendance continues to be of concern parents will be invited to an Attendance Panel review chaired by the LA.

### SCHOOL ROLL

The law requires the school to keep an admission register that acts as the School Roll.

The admission roll should contain details of the pupil from the day that they are admitted to the school (Education Regulations 2016).

Pupils should only be removed from the school roll in accordance with the Education Regulations 2016.

Copies of each year register must be kept for three years.

### SAFEGUARDING

#### First Day of Absence Call

We will regularly request updates of parent-carer contact information. Adults who have day to day care of a pupil are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance. We will contact parents/carers on the first day of unexplained absence. Where absences are of concern and all attempts to engage have failed we will refer to the Access and Response Team for further investigation.

#### Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare we will contact the local Access and Response Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or radicalisation we will contact the Access and Response Team immediately.

If the school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Once the school has confirmation that the child has started at the new school they will update SIMs. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

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If the school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has “disappeared” the matter will be drawn without delay to the attention of the Access and Response Team. Please see further information in Children Missing Education Policy <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/behaviour-and-attendance/children-missing-education/>

### **Part-time time-tables**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil’s needs; this decision is made by the Head Teacher in consultation with external agencies. A part time timetable is time limited, must not be treated as a long-term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. This will be reviewed every two weeks within the time limited period. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

### **Celebrating Success**

We will acknowledge excellence in attendance progress by badges awarded at the end of the school year and by celebrating class attendance in assembly and in the school newsletter.

### **Review**

We will review the attendance policy annually.

### **Advice**

For advice regarding attendance processes please see. <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Attendance-Guidance-July-2016.pdf>

For advice regarding use of attendance codes please see .

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

(For Part Time and other frequently asked questions –Please see page 16 )

Best practice guidance for Governors, Head Teachers