



September 2023

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Dear Parents and Carers,

These are the procedures in place to deal with attendance and punctuality.

Over the last 3 years, the pandemic has resulted in lower attendance figures nationally and now that things have returned to normal, the government's focus is on improving attendance. Please take the time to read this letter as it has information regarding school times, absence and holidays.

#### **Punctuality**

In the morning, the gates will be open at **8:35am** to enable children to get to their designated area near their classrooms, ready for an **8:45am** start. **Anyone arriving after 8:45am will receive a late mark. Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6** will have access via the main gate (off Garden Grove) so that they can walk around to their classrooms for a prompt start. **Y1, Y2 and Y3** can use the School Street entrance.

#### **F2 gate opens at 8:50am**

**Gates will close at 8:55am and anyone arriving after this time must come in to school through the main entrance.** The reason for the late arrival at school will be entered into the electronic registration system, which the Education Welfare Officer sees at regular intervals throughout the year.

If your child is late more than **3** times in a half term, you will receive a phone call from Mrs Gay. If your child continues to be late, you will be invited to a meeting with Mrs Gay to find a solution to enable your child to arrive at school on time.

School finishes at **3:15pm**. Parents should ensure that they are at school by **3:15pm** to collect their child(ren). If parents are not able to collect their child(ren) at **3:15pm**, alternative arrangements must be made by the parents so that children are collected on time.

#### **F2 finish at 3:20pm.**

Please ensure that school are aware who will be collecting your child(ren) from school.

#### **Parents are also asked to ensure their child(ren) are picked up on time from after school activities.**

In the interest of safeguarding your children, **written consent** is required if you are allowing your child to walk home unsupervised. A form will be sent out for you to sign at the start of each academic year. **(Years 4, 5 and 6 only).**

**F1, F2, Y1, Y2 and Y3 must** be brought to the playground and collected by an **adult** at all times.

As pupils are of primary school age, it is the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that children **arrive at and are collected from school on time.**

We do accept that there are odd occasions when parents will be unavoidably delayed in picking up their children. If this happens you must contact the school office as soon as you are aware that you will be delayed, so that arrangements can be made to keep your child at school until you arrive.

**If your child is ill, school should be contacted as soon as possible on the first day of absence,** to give the reason for your child's absence, and a possible return to school date.

If school have not received a phone call to give a reason for the absence, you will be contacted by Mrs Gay, Attendance Officer. If we cannot contact you, we will conduct a home visit.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

**Wherever possible, medical/dental appointments must be made out of school hours.**

It is important that children are present at registration to get their attendance mark. If your child arrives at school after 9:10am following a doctor or dental appointment, they are marked in the register as 'out for the whole morning'.

**Please note: *children should be collected and returned to school by a parent/carer.*** This is for safeguarding and health and safety reasons. A telephone call, email or note should be sent in to school to inform the teacher that a child is to be collected for an appointment along with confirmation of the appointment.

### **Absence from School**

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the DfES Statutory requirements states that parents **do not** have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. **Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

If you wish to take your child out of school under these circumstances the '**Leave of Absence in Term Time due to Exceptional circumstances**' form should be collected from Mrs Gay, completed fully and handed in to the office.

If we have reason to believe your child is on holiday, and no form has been handed in, you will receive a 'Reason to Believe' letter.

**If a leave of absence form is not handed in then your child could be classed as a child missing education.**

Attendance and punctuality will be taken into account prior to a decision being made with regards to **exceptional circumstances.**

**Please note that attendance and punctuality are monitored rigorously both by school and the Education Welfare Service. When a child's attendance level drops below 96.7% parents will receive a phone call and may be asked for evidence of a doctor's appointment regarding any further absences. Mrs Gay will work with parents to improve attendance as poor attendance at school can result in fines for parents.**

**If attendance does not improve, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service as they may be able to offer different strategies that may work for you and your family.**

**If your child's attendance drops below 90%, it is classed as persistent absence and you will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss how we can improve your child's attendance.**

From September 2019, there is a revised code of conduct for issuing penalty notices please read the following:

**Revised Code of Conduct for the issuing of Penalty Notices to parents for unauthorised pupil absence or leave of absence from school September 2019.**

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMB) has now received Council Cabinet approval for changes to the Code of Conduct regarding the issuing of Penalty Notices which are to be implemented from the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019. (See appendix 1). The proposed changes to the Code of Conduct were circulated to Schools, Academies, Governing Bodies, Chief Executives of Academy Trusts and the Chief of Police for Barnsley as part of the consultation period which commenced on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and concluded on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

**The changes to the Code of Conduct are:**

The removal of the following criteria which Headteachers were required to consider under the current Code of Conduct when assessing the merits of a **leave of absence** request during term time:

- previous periods of leave of absence
- leave of absences taken in the first term
- exams and assessments
- employers' letter(s)
- removal of school attendance target

Under the new Code, Penalty Notices **will** be issued if **any** of following three conditions applies:

- A pupil has accrued **five or more** consecutive days of unauthorised leave of absence (holiday in term time)
- If due to sporadic unauthorised absences, then, other than in specific circumstances, the liable parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to affect an improvement. If there are further absences within the 15-day monitoring period then a Penalty Notice may be issued
- An **excluded** pupil present in a public place without justification, during the school hours of the school day where the pupil is on roll, during the first five days of each fixed period or permanent exclusion

**Legal Context**

The Education Welfare Service Issues Penalty Notices on behalf of all schools and academies across Barnsley as part of the Council's statutory duties. Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority at the request of Headteachers (or designated Deputy). Prior to any request, the school must ensure that they can evidence that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the parent/carer has committed an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. The offence relates to the unauthorised absence during the period in question and not the non-payment of the fine, therefore, schools must consider each case on its own merits to ensure it passes the evidential test.

**Section 444(1) Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil.**

**(1) 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**

## Impact on Attendance

The changes will provide clarity across the system which has been lacking since the Supreme Court hearing in April 2017 and the continued delay in the issuing of revised guidance from the DfE. The proposal will ensure that Barnsley is aligned with other Local Authorities across the country that have amended their respective Codes. The proposal will further promote to families the importance of consistent attendance and this will support the ongoing efforts of schools and the Council in raising awareness of children, young people and families of the impact that attendance has on their education and longer-term outcomes. The proposal is part of a strategy across the Council and the Barnsley Alliance to improve attendance.

***Please remember all holidays in term time are classed as unauthorised absences unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been discussed with school, and; [failure to inform school with a reason for any absence is also classed as an unauthorised absence, which can also lead to a fine.](#)***

Attendance statistics are collected regularly throughout the year by the DfES and in order for school to achieve a good attendance record, we rely on the support of parents/carers.

If you are experiencing any issues or need some support, please contact Mrs Gay.

Thank you for your support in ensuring that we have good attendance and punctuality rates.

Yours sincerely

Mrs T Gay

PSA / Attendance Officer