

BARLEY LANE SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY 2019/2020

PHILOSOPHY

Barley Lane School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all our pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognize that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

If there are any problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the students to full attendance at all times.

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage the full attendance and punctuality that underpin good or better learning progress
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimize its occurrence
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record attendance
- Will work closely with parents/carers should attendance/punctuality give cause for concern

STATUTORY DUTY OF SCHOOLS

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or carers to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

PRINCIPLES

Parents/Carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance.

Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place. Parents/Carers are required to provide the school with an explanation in the event of non-attendance. Persistent non-attendance may be viewed as a safeguarding issue as it is a child's right to attend school.

PROCEDURES

Registration Time

- 9.00am – 9.20am students arrive at school
- 9.20am – 9.30am registration at assembly hall
- 1.30pm – 1.35pm registration at assembly hall
- Pupil's arriving after 9.20am but before 9.30am will be recorded in the registers as being late. (L). The Headteacher will be notified and a course of action identified.
- Pupil's arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as unauthorised late. (U) which is an unauthorised absence for the whole session. The Headteacher will be notified and absence procedures will be followed as noted below.
- Concerns relating to attendance and/or punctuality should initially be discussed with the Head teacher or school attendance officer
- Referrals will then be passed to the Education Welfare Officer
- The Education Welfare Office will select the most appropriate strategy for dealing with the issue in consultation with the school, this may include meeting with parents/carers, home visit, involvement with other agencies or consideration of legal proceedings being started if previous intervention is not successful.

Holiday and other absence request procedures

Parents/Carers

- Will note that amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave. Parents are not entitled to take their children out of school for up to ten school days per school year, which had been the previous interpretation of the legislation. The amendments now make it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

- Are required to complete a Request for Authorised Absence if they wish to take their children out of school. Authorisation will only be given in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Head teacher.
- All absences must be explained by a parental note or message. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence. All absence-related messages received by any member of staff will be conveyed to the school office. If no information from home is forthcoming, the school office will contact the child's parents/carers. The school office will pay particular attention to the possibility of unauthorised absence and take speedy action if this is suspected

A parent must complete an **Absence Request Form (for exceptional circumstances)** from the school office.

School will always put the education of the child first when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. In doing so, school will also take into account the child's age, stage of education, internal assessment weeks and educational progress when making a decision. It is not the school's decision to fine parents for unauthorised absences, but is at the discretion of Devon's Educational Social Welfare Service.

It is Devon County Council policy to issue Penalty Notices or fines for unauthorised absence. Details of the implementation of fines can be found in Devon County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. Unauthorised absences may well result in the instigation of parental responsibility measures which could be a penalty notice, or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months. These Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised holidays within term time and unauthorised absence from school when the circumstances appear to have been avoidable, (e.g. child too tired after a late night, a birthday treat, family friends/relatives visiting).

Parents, pupils and staff are to be made aware of the importance of good attendance including distribution of Local Authority generated information where appropriate. Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.

- Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% may be invited in to school by the Head teacher to discuss strategies to improve their child's attendance
- Structured meetings will be held at appropriate times with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance / punctuality is a source of concern.
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 85% will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Role of Education Welfare Officer in Promoting Attendance

- The Education Welfare Officer will work closely with the Head teacher and Attendance Officer in order to promote positive attendance with both students and families
- The Education Welfare Officer will meet regularly with the Head teacher and Attendance Officer in order to efficiently identify concerns

Monitoring where students are:- The young people in our care can react inappropriately and impulsively, it is very important we are aware of their movements we will therefore make the following checks:-

- On arrival staff meet with taxis each morning and the transport officer notes any absentees
- The Head teacher or senior colleague meets and greets every student who arrives
- At our morning meeting the register is taken by the school's Attendance Officer or member of staff and clarity is sought on any late arrivals or those arriving still on public transport, those learning off-site and any missing students
- The register is given to the Attendance Officer and calls are made home to ensure all absences are explained and legitimate and every pupil is accounted for.
- All absences are recorded in the Absence Book and signed off by a SMT
- School will only accept reasons for absence from the parent/carer with parental responsibilities. Direct contact should be made with the school and information will not be taken from other sources i.e taxi drivers or the child themselves.
- If parents/carers cannot be contacted at the beginning of the day reasonable attempts will be made by the school to contact the parent/carer to establish a reason for absence. (This could be via telephone calls, text messages and email)
- Where there is genuine concern for a child's absence and no reasonable contact has been made by the parent/carer it may be necessary for the school to contact the Police to undertake a Welfare Check.

School staff will check class lists against the absence lists regularly throughout the day in order to identify any missing pupil's during the school day. These should be carried out as described below:-

- Teachers in each class/lesson should check that any absences from their class are authorised or explained and must be satisfied that the child is safe and his whereabouts known and approved and can do so using the walkabout support team and their walkie talkie
- Unauthorised or unexplained absences from class must be reported promptly to the duty teacher via the 'walkabout' and teachers must be able to explain absences.
- Staff will check pupil's against the lunch seating plan to ensure pupil's are accounted for.

- Staff will be vigilant when pupil's are moving around the school site and will notify the SMT or Attendance Officer if there is a concern around a missing student.
- The end of the day meeting or dispersal to taxis should include a discreet final check to ensure students are accounted for at day's end.

Agreed by Governing Body January 2019

Adopted: January 2019
Date of next review: January 2020