



Barlaston C.E. (VC) First School

“Let Your Light Shine” Matthew 5:16

Attendance Policy

Our Vision Statement

Let your light shine through family, friendship and faith

Our Spirituality Vision

Spirituality is an ever changing journey through life, connecting each individual with something bigger than themselves

Equality Statement

The school is committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. All pupils have access to the curriculum, and the right to a learning environment, which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping.

Dyslexia Statement

To ensure that children on the dyslexic spectrum have equal opportunities and that their diverse strengths are celebrated and built on.

Safeguarding Statement

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Throughout the policy where we refer to ‘parents’ this describes the person or people with parental responsibility.

This policy is designed to support good attendance and punctuality. Educational research shows a strong links between 100% attendance and high achievement.

Aims

Through our Christian values we aim to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers to fulfil their responsibility in making sure that their child receives a full-time education and is always punctual so that they can access that education to the best of their ability.
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

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

Principles

At Barlaston First School, children are encouraged to flourish, and let their light shine through family, friendship and faith. In order for this to happen, children need to attend school regularly. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole School community. Promoting good attendance will also help students to meet the expectations that they will face in the workplace.

The School will promote good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All pupils should be at School, on time, every day the School is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any concerns about persistent poor attendance to the Families First Local Support Team for further action.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the student is present; engaged in an approved educational activity off-site; or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from School has to be classified by the School, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only School can authorise the absence, not parent/carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE from School means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES are those which the School does not consider reasonable and is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence. This includes:

- parent/carers keeping students off School unnecessarily;
- absences where the School has not yet received an acceptable explanation;
- any other circumstance where the Headteacher has not given authorisation.

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend School. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the School, the parent/carers and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, parents/carers should never cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from School without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

The School is always willing to support parent/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties that may result in non-attendance. Parents/carers should contact the School at an early stage so that we can work together to resolve any problems. Working in partnership nearly always brings success.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the School or the parent/carer may refer the pupil to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support.

When all measures to improve the student's attendance have failed, the EWO can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parent/carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the student. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Barlaston First School have employed Attend EDC Ltd an Independent Education Welfare Company. They will work with the school to raise attendance and deal with welfare matters. They will communicate with you if there is an issue they can support us with. If a parent/carer wishes to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information they can do so on contact@attendedc.co.uk

Procedures

- *Parents/carers will be informed annually via the School website about the School Attendance Policy.*
- *Pupils who achieve good attendance will be recognised in many ways including; congratulations in praise assemblies, letters home recognising good attendance, individual tutor group rewards etc*
- *If a pupil is absent from School, parent/carers should contact the School by telephone before 9.30 am. Parent/carers are able to leave a message on the answerphone out of school hours.*
- *If no notification has been received by 9.30am, the School will make first day contact. This contact will be done using the School text messaging service.*
- *Students who arrive late for School and miss morning registration must sign in at reception.*

- *The official School register will close at:
Morning session – 9.30am
Afternoon session – 1.30pm*
- *Attendance will be monitored every week by the Head and letters will be sent home where there are concerns about poor attendance.*
- *The Head may convene a meeting between parent/carers, appropriate School staff, and any relevant external agencies. This meeting may also consider issues of punctuality and behaviour.*
- *If a pupil has 20 unauthorised sessions during a twelve-week period, a referral to the Local Authority will be made by the school.*
- *The Local Authority will review the current situation; offer support and consider further action, which could be to recognise that attendance has improved or to follow more formal procedures where attendance has not improved. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent/carer receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.*
- *Parent/carers who are subject to a Penalty Notice have 3 choices:*
 - *pay the £60 fine within 21 days;*
 - *pay £120 after 21 days but within 28 days;*
 - *don't pay the fine. In this case, the Notice will be withdrawn and Magistrates Court proceedings will start. This could result in a fine of up to £1,000 for each student whose attendance is causing concern and for each parent/carer involved in the prosecution.*
- *The School has a procedure in place for roll call in the events of an evacuation.*

Absence During a School Term (Holidays)

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Headteacher's and Governors have determined that:

- In exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for a maximum of five days of holiday providing your child has a good (95% or higher) attendance record over the previous three terms.
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Officer will be notified.

Changes to the Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices Commencing 1st January 2018

- ***Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time***

Any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the head teacher to the EWO.

- ***Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness***

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

Off-Site Educational Activities

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity an approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Roles and responsibilities

Teachers

- Mark registers accurately and on time.
- Identify the correct code for absence.
- Pass on to reception staff promptly all communications from parent/carers regarding planned absences.
- Challenge students re: poor attendance.
- Monitor attendance patterns and make referrals to Senior Leader (Attendance) or Heads of Progress and Support where there are causes for concern.
- Celebrate excellent attendance.

Head

- Oversee the tracking of students with poor or irregular attendance.

- Ensure there is rigour in following up pupil absence.
- Arrange meetings with parents of poor attenders.
- Oversee the Tutor Attendance File.
- Monitor the attendance of a Year Group and liaise with Heads of Progress and Support.
- Publish half termly attendance figures.
- Issue praise letters and incentives for good attendance.

Attendance Clerk

- Monitor completion of on-line registers.
- Make first day contact with parent/carers to establish reasons for absence and alert parents/carers to cases of absence without their knowledge. This will be done initially using the Schools Comms text messaging system.
- Record all notifications of reasons for absence.
- Print off half termly statistics.

Educational Welfare Officer Attend EDC

- Liaise with Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) via monthly meetings.
- Make contact with parent/carers where there are causes for concern (if a student has 20 unauthorised sessions during a 12 week period).
- Record contact made in relation to these cases.
- Confirm in writing future requirements regarding attendance and medical notes.
- Provide feedback to the School – i.e. results of initial investigation and an expectation of future Educational Welfare Officer input.
- Inform School of referral made to other external agencies.
- Organise multi-agency attendance panel meetings when a case has been opened with Building Resilient Families.
- Issue fixed penalty notices or initiate Court proceedings.

Leadership Group

- Attend multi-agency Attendance Surgery meetings.
- Monitor patterns of attendance by Year Group.
- Report on attendance patterns to the Governing Body.
- Provide information for the Families First Local Support Team when requested.
- Liaise with Educational Welfare Officer (Attend EDC)

Governors

- Set annual attendance targets.
- Review attendance patterns.
- Meet with parents whose child's attendance falls below 80% for non-medical reasons.

Using Attendance Data

- A pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.
- The Attendance Administrator/Manager will provide relevant teachers with regular attendance for each pupil within their tutor group/class.

Each half term, parents will receive a letter informing them of their children current attendance percentage. This will be accompanied by the traffic light information seen below.

Pupils will be grouped into categories based on their percentage attendance as follows:

GREEN GROUP
96% - 100%
WELL DONE - THIS IS EXCELLENT!

YELLOW GROUP
90% - 95.9%
LOW ATTENDANCE

RED GROUP
Less than 90%
PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL

Attendance during the school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which approximates to this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Summary

The School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parent/carers and to promote good attendance. Equally, parent/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parent/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Further Information

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on: safeguarding, behaviour and SEN. Please also follow this link for further advice:
<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Updated Jan 2021

Reviewed Jan 2023