

# BARDSEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Ratified by Governing Body:

Review Date:

Chair of Governors:

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## **Why is regular attendance at school important?**

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have.

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. We know that children get poorly and need to be at home occasionally. However, children missing school can fall behind academically and socially and any unnecessary absences should be avoided. Bardsey Primary takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment, and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school. The school is also aware that irregular attendance may also be an indication of Child Protection concerns.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- ◆ Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- ◆ Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- ◆ Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- ◆ Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- ◆ Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

## **Statements of expectations**

### **The Government expects us to:**

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%).

- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled; and,
- act early to address patterns of absence.

### **Principles**

- Children must attend regularly to achieve their full potential.
- Children who miss out on school can feel vulnerable and left behind.
- Absence in term time is disruptive and can seriously affect a child's education.
- Unauthorised absence can lead to prosecution.

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers

### **Persistent Absence Indicator**

The Department for Education regards attendance of **90%** or below as persistent absenteeism.

The table below shows an indication of approximately how many sessions a pupil needs to miss per half term to meet the threshold of persistent absenteeism.

- Average attendance of 85-90% over 5 school years equates to pupils missing half a school year of education.
- Average attendance of 80% over 5 school years equates to pupils missing a whole school year.

HALF TERM		
1	7 sessions	3.5 Days
2	14 sessions	7 Days
3	20 sessions	10 Days
4	25 sessions	12.5 Days
5	31 sessions	15.5 Days
6	38 sessions	19 Days

### % Attendance expressed in number of days absent

Attendance / absence is presented as a percentage figure, but it is helpful to equate this to the number of days off:

98% = fewer than four days absent in a school year

95% = fewer than ten days absent in one school year

90% = 4 weeks absent in one school year (equates to a  $\frac{1}{2}$  day each week)

85% = 5.5 weeks absent in one school year (approaching a whole half-term in the school year)

80% = 7.5 weeks absent in one school year (equates to one day each week or a whole half term)

### School Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

Children and young people may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child and young person is everyone's responsibility and promoting the welfare and life opportunities of all children and young people encompasses :- Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti- bullying.

Children who are missing education are at greater risk than those who are seen regularly in school. These risks include:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Radicalisation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Modern Day Slavery
- Forced Marriage
- Domestic Violence
- Neglect
- Human Trafficking
- Honour-based Violence

This school's Attendance Policy is part of broader suite of Safeguarding Policies including the school's Child Protection Policy.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. That is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

### **Roles and Responsibilities Attendance**

<b>PARENTS/CARERS will:</b>
Ensure that their children attend school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. Notify school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school. Make routine dental and medical appointments outside school hours where possible Supply medical evidence when required. Work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance. Ensure all contact details are up to date and inform school of any changes in details Provide school with two emergency contact details.

**School have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular attendance.**

**SCHOOL STAFF will:**

Complete the register at the start of each session (morning and afternoon)  
Monitor daily patterns of attendance and punctuality  
Make parents aware of concerns over irregular attendance  
Input attendance data onto the system  
Make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence  
Take actions where concerns have been identified  
Inform Governors of attendance records  
Inform parents of individual pupil's attendance record  
Meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern  
Request medical evidence if a pupil's attendance is below 90% or if there has been 3 periods of absence.  
Referrals to the Local Authority School Attendance Service  
Request Penalty Notices to be issued for unauthorised leave in term time. Request Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SERVICE will:**

Support the school in achieving its targets and addressing concerns  
Support families in ensuring their child/children attend school regularly Prepare and facilitate school attendance meetings for irregular attendance including punctuality  
Contact the parent/carer by phone, letter or home visit to discuss the schools concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved  
Quality Assure Penalty Notice requests for unauthorised absence and implement legal proceedings

**GOVERNING BODY will:**

Monitor whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards.  
Nominate a named Governor for Attendance

## **Registration**

- Registers are called at 9.00am and 1.00pm
- Registers close at 9.15am and 1.15pm
- Any pupils arriving after 9.00am but before 9.15a.m will be marked late
- Any pupils arriving after 9.15am will be marked late and unauthorised
- Similarly, for the afternoon session, any pupil arriving after 1.15pm will be marked late and unauthorised.

## **Lateness**

- Any child arriving after 9.00am should report to the School Office with a responsible adult and sign in.

## **Following up lateness**

- Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be initially contacted by one of our office staff as to the reasons for the lateness. Where this percentage of lateness becomes a regular occurrence, parents or carers will be contacted by the Learning Mentor, who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

## **Leaving and returning to school during the school day**

- When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified and pupils must be signed in/out
- In the event of a fire, office staff will take the signing in/out book outside with them and ensure that it is checked.

## **Absences**

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school. A telephone call is acceptable.
- All planned absences must be authorised by the Headteacher.
- The school will only authorise absence for an exceptional reason.
- The school will check up on any absences where a reason has not been provided.
- All absences are reported to the Local Authority.

**Authorised Absence is defined as:**

- Genuine illness
- Medical or dental appointment (routine appointments should be arranged out of school time)
- Bereavement - (Headteacher's discretion)
- Religious observance (no more than 2 days per academic year)
- Approved leave in term time where there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the Head Teacher.

**Unauthorised absence is defined as:**

Absence in term time where permission has **not** been given by the school (these are also defined in Appendix A). This means that parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school during term time.

- Late after the registers have closed - 'U' code
- Unexplained absence. Any child whose absence is on-going and remains unexplained for an extended period (10 days) will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education (CME)
- Staying at home to care for younger children or sick relatives.
- Going shopping or having a haircut.
- Any absence that the school has not been informed of by letter or by telephone
- Weddings, Birthdays or Anniversaries including Parents' Weddings.
- Transport issues or car broken down.
- Holidays in term time (following the Department for Education's Guidelines)
- Travelling to airport to meet relatives/friends.
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment.
- Translating
- Visiting sick relatives

## Punctuality

Being late to school has a significant impact on the amount of learning time lost over a school year. The table below will help you understand how much time is lost by being regularly late.

Minutes late per day	Number of days over a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

Pupils arriving after the register has closed will receive a 'U' code 'Late'. In the ARM cluster, schools actively discourage late arrival and are alert to patterns of late arrival, which could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice being issued.

## Exceptional circumstances

Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time.

Absence in term time will only be considered if parents/carers make a request to the school in a letter to the Headteacher giving **exceptional** reasons why the application for absence has been requested and provide information to support their application.

The Headteacher will decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

Parents/carers, who take their children out of school during term time without authorisation, may be issued with a penalty fine of up to £120 and face a possible prosecution in court.

## Continuing concerns regarding attendance

If attendance continues to be of concern and there are a number of unauthorised absences, then this may lead to a referral being made to the Educational Welfare Officer. Alternatively, a referral may be made directly to The Leeds City Council, School Attendance Service.

Ultimately parents/carers can be held to account for failing to ensure that their children attend school punctually and regularly. Leeds City Council's, School Attendance Service carries out this statutory function on behalf of the Local Authority in order to uphold the right of children and young people to access their education. Where necessary statutory action can and will be taken, which may take the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution of parents in the Magistrates Court resulting in a fine, or a statutory order.

This document is compiled with Refer to:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/741315/Keeping\\_Children\\_Safe\\_in\\_Education\\_2018\\_Part\\_One\\_14.09.18.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741315/Keeping_Children_Safe_in_Education_2018_Part_One_14.09.18.pdf)

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# Appendices

## Appendix A - Guidance from NAHT on authorised term time pupil absence



### Guidance on authorised term-time pupil absence

A little background to term-time pupil absences On matters relating to term-time pupil absences, the Education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed all references to ‘family holidays’ and ‘extended leave’ as well as the ‘notional threshold of ten school days’.

The 2013 amendments made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless ‘exceptional circumstances’ prevail. The regulations also state that head teachers should determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school in the event that leave is granted for ‘exceptional circumstances’.

We believe the guidelines in this document are compatible with the amendments and help to clarify the meaning of ‘exceptional circumstances’; they do not change it.

It’s generally held that head teachers can authorise a pupil’s absence during termtime but the merits of such a request are now required to be exceptional.

NAHT’s approach and advice to managing term-time pupil absence requests

There continues to be some debate about what ‘exceptional circumstances’ mean when deciding whether to grant absence for pupils during term-time. We think we can help in this respect.

The NAHT believes it is valuable to have some guiding principles to back schools in their decisions to grant term-time pupil absences and to provide some consistency.

These guiding principles have no statutory authority; schools are at liberty to adopt them nonetheless as part of their overall approach to granting pupil term-time absence.

The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional circumstances’ are that they are ‘rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

#### Guiding principles:

1. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Head teachers will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term-time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
2. The decision to authorise a pupil’s absence is wholly at the head teacher’s discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.
3. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time, then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered ‘exceptional circumstances’.
4. Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to ‘exceptional circumstances’, but for the funeral service only, not for extended leave.
5. Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, again, not for extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
6. Schools may wish to take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.

7. Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
8. Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or a crisis.
9. It is acceptable to take a pupil's record of attendance into account when making absence related decisions.
10. It is important to note that head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorised. Where schools serve communities whose patterns of work create a regular barrier to attendance and family life, schools could consider changes to term times; we strongly recommend this approach is coordinated across schools in a designated area or region.

## **Appendix B - Codes**

### **PRESENT**

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
L	Late (before registers closed)

### **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence

**UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

- G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- U Late (after registers closed)

**APPROVED EDUCATION ACTIVITY = PRESENT**

- B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
- D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)
- J Interview
- P Approved sporting activity
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience

**NOT COUNTED IN POSSIBLE ATTENDANCES**

- X Non-compulsory school age absence
- Y Enforced closure – whole school or partial
- Z Pupil not yet on roll
- # School closed to pupils