



Attendance Policy



Written by: Rebecca Vodden-Page **Date:** October 2019

Approved by: Academy Improvement Board

Last reviewed on: July 2021

Next review due October 2022
by:

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Policy Statement.....	3
3. Definitions.....	3
4. Procedures.....	4
5. Requesting a Leave of Absence	4
6. Lateness.....	5
7. Monitoring Attendance.....	5
8. Following up on poor attendance	6
9. Informing Parents.....	6
10. Policy Review.....	6
Appendix 1 – Parental Responsibility Letter.....	7
Appendix 2 – School letter to parent advising that their case has been referred to the local authority	8
Appendix 3 – Penalty Notice Workflow.....	9
Appendix 4 – Penalty notice warning letter	10
Appendix 5 – Registration codes.....	11

1. Introduction

This policy has been developed while working closely with other schools in the local area and the Cavendish Learning Trust.

Barrow Hill Primary Academy is an inclusive school. This policy reflects our inclusive practice. All staff and volunteers in our school work hard to ensure that all pupils are able to access their right to high quality education. We believe that all pupils should be able to attend school for every session that the school is open. Where pupils and their families have specific needs, our school will work with them to support individual action plans. Through developing strong relationships with pupils and families, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve, and aim to exceed their potential.

2. Policy Statement

We expect all children to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit enough and healthy enough to do so. We do all that we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. This is supported by the effective implementation of the Teaching and Learning Policy, where learning is made as exciting and practical as possible. We strive to make our school a happy and positive experience for all children. We reward those children whose attendance is very good. We make the best provision for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2016 the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. The register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

3. Definitions

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones school to explain the absence.
- Only the School can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.
- Parents can make a request in advance for a leave of absence to the School Attendance Panel, which comprises of the Head of Academy and two members of the Academy Improvement Board. The Attendance panel will follow the appropriate procedures (detailed below) when making a decision to authorise a leave of absence request.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. An absence is therefore unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent, or where the parent/guardian has not notified the school of a reason for absence.

4. Procedures

Notifying a medical appointment / absence due to illness

- a) If a child is absent, PARENTS have the responsibility to contact the school as soon as possible to notify the school of the reason for the absence. Normally this should be, at the latest, by 9.15am on the day of absence by telephoning the School Office.
- b) If a PARENT knows a child will be absent in advance, e.g. for a planned medical appointment- that cannot be made outside of school hours, then the PARENT has the responsibility to inform the school in advance.
- c) Sometimes it is not possible to telephone the office to notify of an absence. In these circumstances the PARENT has the responsibility to write a note to the School explaining the reason for absence.

School will not authorise the following reasons for absence:

- Routine appointments to the dentist, doctors, opticians or other medical appointments, which could reasonably be made outside of school times
- Wedding of non-close family members (our definition of a close family member is father, mother or direct sibling)
- Child absence due to parental sickness
- Car trouble – it is your duty to ensure that you can bring your child to school, no matter what happens with your transport and you should make alternative arrangements.
- Overnight stays at family members (separated parents should work together to ensure regular attendance)
- Term time holidays

5. Requesting a Leave of Absence

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

If parents feel, there are “exceptional circumstances” they may then apply for leave of absence to the Attendance Panel. It is the responsibility of the PARENTS to complete a leave of absence

request form in advance of the planned absence. The form is available in paper copy from the School Office. PARENTS must understand that leave of absences are not authorised retrospectively and that authorisation is ENTIRELY at the Attendance Panels discretion. Exceptional circumstances include:

- Works closures – where a place of work dictates which weeks in the year you can take annual leave from work
- Bereavements
- Weddings / Graduations of a close family member (our definition of a close family member is father / mother or direct sibling).
- Sporting competitions/events with proof of participation from the coach or sporting organisation
- Religious observances.

Evidence may be requested to prove exceptional circumstances.

6. Lateness

Persistent lateness causes problems for children's learning, and is actively discouraged by the school. It causes a child to miss the beginning of the day where important social information is shared, and the beginning of lessons – which holds crucial direct teaching. Both elements have a detrimental effect on the child's ability to make good progress.

- a) Where a pupil arrives between 8.50am and 9.00am they are recorded as present.
- b) When a pupil arrives between 9.00am and 9.15am they are recorded as late before the close of register.
- c) Where a pupil arrives after 9.15am the absence is recorded as LATE AFTER THE CLOSE OF THE REGISTER and the absence IS NOT authorised.
- d) Where pupils are not present by the times in c), and there has been no notice from parents, parents will be contacted via telephone by the school receptionist no later than 10:30am. If no contact is made before lunch time a further safe and well check to the child's home address may be made by either the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead accompanied by another member of staff.

7. Monitoring Attendance

a) The class teachers complete the register at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session. The register is completed with the appropriate codes for attendance and absence, where information is available. Where information is not available, the teacher records the absence with an "O". In the first instance it is the responsibility of the class teacher to ask for information about an absence if none has been given by the parent.

b) The School monitors attendance on a weekly basis. The School Receptionist uses the Schools' Information Management System to aggregate attendance information. This is monitored on a weekly basis by the Learning Mentor. Each class is informed of their overall attendance percentage during Friday's Celebration Assembly. The best class is presented with our 'Attendance Ted' bear.

c) Pupils are awarded a certificate at the end of each term for 100% attendance. Pupils who have between 98-99.9% attendance will receive a good certificate. During the spring and summer term there will also be certificates for children with improved attendance.

d) Where there has been absence without notification or an approved request, the school receptionist contacts the parents requesting the necessary information. Where there is no response the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

e) The Learning Mentor is the allocated key worker who will work alongside families to improve attendance as and when required.

At the end of autumn term and spring term, the Learning Mentor will invite parents of pupils whose attendance is below 96% into school for an attendance monitoring meeting. This will continue to be monitored.

8. Following up on poor attendance

The School participates in termly attendance review meetings. The school consults with Whittington Green Early Help when they are concerned about individual pupil attendance. Pupil information is shared with the Early Help Manager when attendance falls below the absence threshold of 10%. School will act upon the advice given by the Early Help Team and this may include:

- Conducting a home visit
- Contact with parents asking for future medical evidence of absence
- Parents invited into school to discuss attendance concerns
- Parents placed on a pre-legal school attendance panel
- Involvement of other agencies

When attendance falls below the absence threshold of 10%, parents may be issued with a parental responsibility letter (see appendix 1).

If, following the monitoring period, attendance does not improve then an Attendance Panel Meeting will be held involving the Early Help Team, the Learning Mentor and Head of Academy. The parents of the child will also be invited. A meeting is held every term until attendance improves. If attendance does not improve, the Local Authority may consider taking legal action against the parents. (Appendix 2 – Letter to parent's advising their case has been referred to the local authority). (Appendix 3 outlines the workflow for issuing penalty notices)

9. Informing Parents

The School undertakes to remind parents regularly of their responsibilities with regards to their children's attendance. This is done through an annual letter home, regular newsletters and through information on the school website.

10. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually.

Appendix 1 – Parental Responsibility Letter

SCHOOL LETTER TO PARENT – ONE PER PARENT

TO BE SENT ON HEADED PAPER

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Date

Dear

As you are aware, I am concerned about NAME's school attendance. I have enclosed a copy of HIS/HER attendance printout for your information. Whilst the average attendance for a child of PHASE age is NUMBER % your child's attendance is NUMBER%.

I am required to make you aware of your legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance. Under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 a parent is guilty of an offence if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school.

If NAME's attendance continues to be unsatisfactory and HIS/HER absences marked as unauthorised then I will have no option but to refer your case to Derbyshire County Council for consideration of legal action. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine per child.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £1000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £2500 and/or a community order or imprisonment.

I will continue to monitor the situation but if NAME's attendance does not improve over the next NUMBER weeks, then legal action may follow. If you wish to talk to ME/NAME, TITLE regarding this issue or you require any support please do not hesitate to contact ME/HIM/HER on the number at the top of this page.

Yours sincerely

Head of Academy

Appendix 2 – School letter to parent advising that their case has been referred to the local authority

SCHOOL LETTER TO PARENT – ONE PER PARENT

TO BE SENT ON HEADED PAPER

Dear

As you know, NAME's attendance has been an ongoing concern and he/she is in the category of persistent absentee.

Unfortunately, despite previous legal intervention and offers of support, NAME has continued to miss school without good reason and HIS/HER absences remain unauthorised.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly then their parent is guilty of an offence.

Consequently, I intend to forward your case to the Local Authority for consideration of legal proceedings against you.

Please contact NAME OF MEMBER OF STAFF on the telephone number at the head of this letter, if you wish further clarification on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Head of Academy

Enc: Register Extract

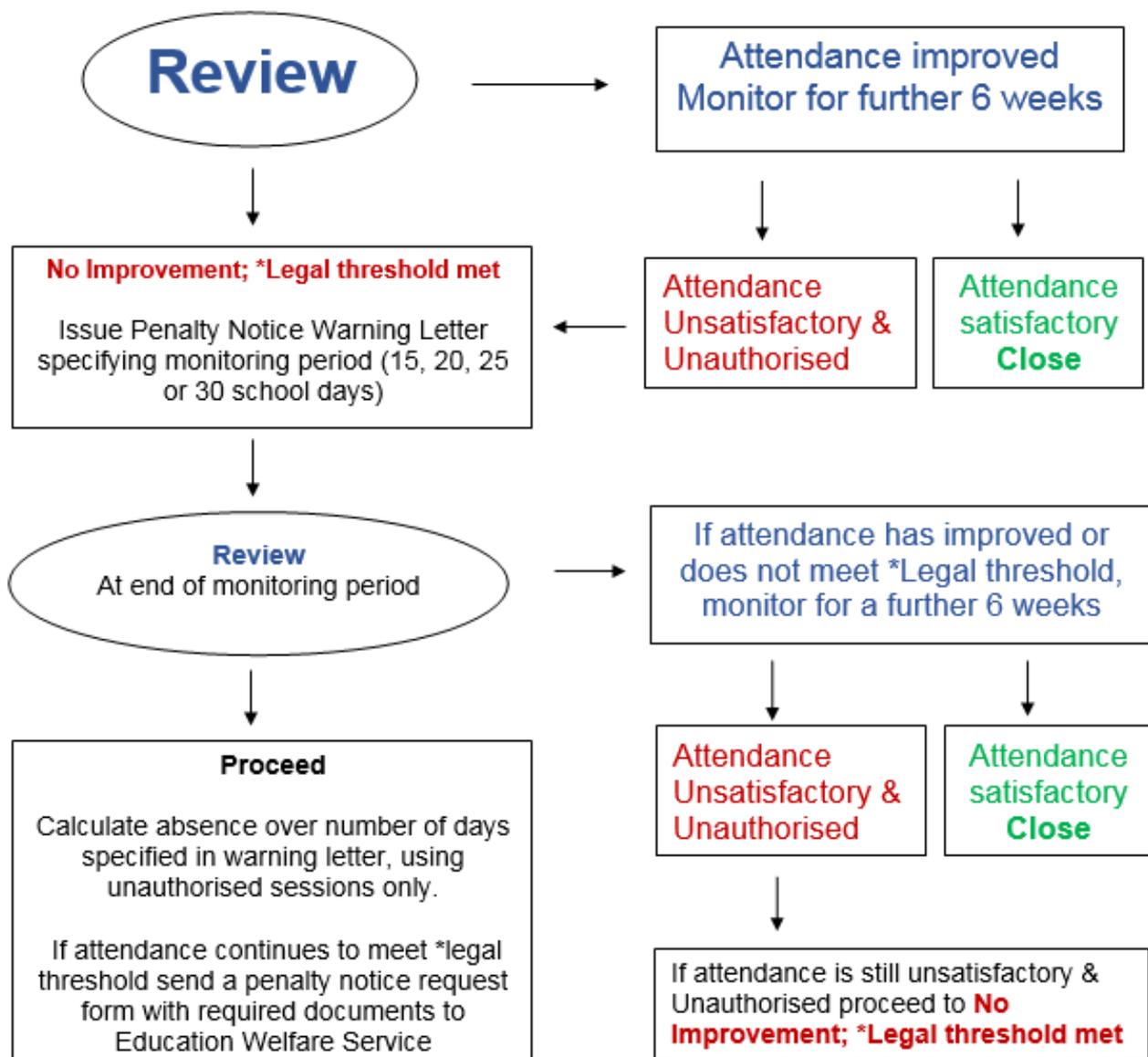
Appendix 3 – Penalty Notice Workflow

PENALTY NOTICE WORKFLOW

To be used in conjunction with the guidance notes for requesting the issue of a penalty notice.

Emerging Attendance Concern

- Identify a key worker where possible
- Undertake and record preventative work for 2 -6 weeks
- Best practise - attempt at least one pre-arranged home visit
- Ensure parent is informed of their parental responsibility either in person or by sending Parental Responsibility Letter



Appendix 4 – Penalty notice warning letter

SCHOOL LETTER TO PARENT – ONE PER PARENT

TO BE SENT ON HEADED PAPER

Private and Confidential

Dear

Re: *Unsatisfactory Attendance at NAME School*

England average attendance %; NAME'S attendance %

I am writing to you about NAME'S education. His/her attendance record at NAME School is unsatisfactory with some absences unauthorised. As you know, it is a parent's responsibility to make sure their children receive a regular education.

Unless there is a significant improvement in NAME'S attendance over the next NUMBER school days, I will ask Derbyshire County Council to issue you with a Penalty Notice.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by S23.1 Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) a fine of one hundred and twenty pounds (£120) payable within twenty-eight days, reduced to sixty pounds (£60) if paid within twenty-one days, can be imposed for this offence. Failure to pay will result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If NAME has any absence over the next NUMBER school days, as a result of a medical condition or medical appointments which could not be made out of school time please provide evidence that this is the case. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards or, if your child is under the hospital, a letter from their consultant. This evidence must relate to the absences taken during monitoring period stated above.

Please do not hesitate to contact NAME OF MEMBER OF STAFF on the telephone number at the head of this letter should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Head of Academy

Enc: Advice for Parents and Carers

Attendance Record Extract

Appendix 5 – Registration codes

REGISTRATION CODES

Code / \	Present in school / = am \ = pm
Code B	Off-site educational activity
Code C	Leave of absence authorised by the school
Code D	Dual registered – at another educational establishment
Code E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
Code G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher
Code H	Holiday authorised by the school
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
Code J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
Code L	Late arrival before the register has closed
Code M	Medical or dental appointments
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided
Code O	Absent from school without authorisation
Code P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
Code R	Religious observance
Code S	Study leave
Code T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
Code U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Code V	Educational visit or trip
Code W	Work experience
Code X	Not required to be in school
Code Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Code Z	Pupil not on admission register
Code #	Planned whole or partial school closure