



## Barn Croft Primary School Attendance Policy

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all 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 the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### 2 Definitions

#### 2.1 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 the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
- If there are more than 10 days absence a year for medical reasons, a medical certificate or similar proof will need to be seen before further absences can be authorised.
- The Head Teacher may only authorize an absence from school in the following circumstances:
  - If there is a family bereavement one day will be authorised for the funeral
  - Up to 2 days can be authorised for religious observance
  - Where a parent and/or carer is a member of the armed services then the Head Teacher may authorize an absence for other reasons

#### 2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

#### 2.3 Punctuality

- Punctuality is important and a child who arrives at school between the opening of registers at 9.00am and up until and including 9.14am will be marked as a late; children arriving after 9.15am will be registered as an unauthorised absence. Patterns of late arrival may result in prosecution. In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, the school may keep the register open for a longer period.

### **3 If a child is absent**

- 3.1 When a child is absent, parents are asked to refer to the school's Absence Reporting Procedures, to ensure compliance with school policy.
- 3.2 After registration, checks are made to ensure that all children are accounted for. Telephone calls are made to parents of children who are not in school to ensure that children are safe; this forms part of our Child Protection procedure.

### **4 Requests for leave of absence**

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence by completing the appropriate "Request For Absence From School" form, available from the school office.
- 4.2 As the local code of practice allows, parents can be given a penalty notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absence.

### **5 Long-term absence**

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

### **6 Repeated unauthorised absences**

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LEA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the LEA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.
- 6.3 Under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Local Authorities are required to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parent/carer of a child who has irregular school attendance, where the absence is unauthorised by the school. Fixed Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution. They do not require the parent/carer to appear in court and no criminal record is incurred.
- 6.4 An assessment of the circumstances will take place before a Fixed Penalty Notice is served. Parents will receive a warning letter advising that if any unauthorised absence occurs they would receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. However the authorising officer (Education Welfare Courts Officer or the Head of Service) has the discretion to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a first offence in exceptional circumstances (Fixed Penalty Notices London Borough of Waltham Forest Local Code of Conduct 2004)
- 6.5 A fixed Penalty notice imposes a fine of £120 (per child) to each parent/carer, reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days, then the fine is doubled and you have to pay £120 within 42 days from the date when the notice was first issued. If the fine is not paid within 42 days, the parent/carer will be prosecuted in a Magistrates Court for the offence under S.444 of the Education Act 1996.

## **7 Planned part-time absence**

- 7.1** There are rare circumstances where a child's part-time absence from the school may be planned with parents/carers to meet the particular welfare needs of the child. Any such planned absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher;
- The parents/carer and Headteacher must agree and set out in writing the particular needs of the child and how the planned part-time absence will meet the stated needs.
  - The arrangement must be formally reviewed at least at the end of each half term or sooner and, if appropriate re-authorised by the Headteacher.
  - The school and parents/carers must make all efforts to ensure that the child attends school full time and receives the benefits of full time schooling as soon as possible.
- 7.2** In authorising any part-time arrangement the Headteacher must take due regard to:
- The duty of the school to meet the statutory duty to provide all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, the full requirements of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus of RE.
  - Ensure that the child is making educational good progress.
- 7.3** In the event of a request from parents/carers based on the need for a child to settle into school, any arrangement should end before the summer term of Year 1 (unless the child is transferring from another school where the arrangement is part of an EHC Plan and the objectives stated within it). Other requests from parents/carers can only be considered on evidenced medical or serious emotional/psychological grounds.
- 7.4** We are unable to offer flexi-schooling arrangements at this time. Things could change if the government and/or local authority brings in new legislation or guidance.
- 7.5** We will also consider Reception age children being able to start later in the Autumn term, the Spring term or even the Summer term if they are summer born children (from April to August). A child does not reach compulsory school age until the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.
- 7.6** If a parent wishes their child to start school after their 5th birthday in August then they start in Year 1. It is at the discretion of the HT whether they can start in Reception – therefore a year behind their peers. Parents need to get the agreement of the Headteacher, put in an application for a school place for the correct year and if offered a place then they would defer for a year and reapply. Again, this can only be considered on evidenced medical or serious emotional/psychological grounds. It is also important to note that it is not yet known what secondary schools are going to do when these children reach Y7 age. Therefore it is important for parents to know that Barn Croft will not accept any liability for what a secondary school's decision might be in the future if we have agreed to defer a child's place for a year and they start in Reception a year late.
- 7.7** The decisions on all these issues remain with the Headteacher and are not subject to appeal.

## **8 Rewards for good attendance**

- 8.1** All staff articulate and highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality every day recognising its part in continuity and progression in learning.
- 8.2** The class with the highest weekly attendance receives a certificate in Friday's achievement assembly to display in their classroom.
- 8.3** Each class works towards making the word 'Attendance' – earning a letter for 100% attendance. When the word is completed the class are awarded a non-uniform day.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

- 9.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3** The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- 9.4** Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- 9.5** The school will develop an action plan each year to address any attendance & punctuality issues in order to raise the levels of attendance.
- 9.6** This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Signed:**

**Date: January 2019**

**Review Date: January 2020**