

Friern Barnet School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Last Reviewed:	May 2025	Next Review:	May 2027
Approved By:	Head Teacher	Date:	12 May 2025

Policy for Maximising Attendance

Rationale

The school is committed to actively encouraging every student to fulfil their potential. The promotion of a positive climate for learning and robust strategies for maximising student attendance are a critical foundation for supporting this.

Aims

This policy sets out the responsibilities and procedures of all stakeholders involved in maximising student attendance. The Governors, Senior Leadership Team, teachers and all associate staff have a duty to promote good attendance.

Practice

Students

Students are responsible for making sure that their attendance and punctuality is maintained at or above 96%.

- They should attend all of their lessons on time and be equipped and ready to learn.
- They should follow school procedures if they arrive late for school after 9am by signing in at Student Services.
- Students should speak in the first instance to their form tutor if they experience difficulties which may prevent them from attending school regularly, so that students can be offered prompt support.
- They should follow the school procedures and provide student services with evidence of any appointments. Alternatively, parents can also telephone or email the school with an explanation of their child's absence.

Parents

Section 444 of the Education Act states;

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at school, his parent is guilty of an offence".

- If a student is unable to attend school through sickness or other authorised absences (see below) parents must notify the school of the student's absence by telephone on the first and each day of absence.

- Parents should avoid, if possible, making non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.
- Authorised absences include, illness, emergency medical appointments, religious observance, approved sporting activity, unforeseen circumstances. Unauthorised absences include, looking after brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping, other family members illness etc.
- Planned holiday's during term time will not be authorised and will be reported to the London Borough of Barnet. This action may result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice. (Only in exceptional circumstances will the Head Teacher authorise the absence).

Procedures

Registration

- At the beginning of each academic year the names of all the students in a tutor group should be entered into registers on the schools admin system (SIMs) in alphabetical order. The school's Student Services Manager is responsible for making sure the coding system recording attendance and reasons for absence is in accordance with Local Authority requirements
- Registration begins at 8.40am each morning. Teachers **MUST** take an accurate register with five minutes of the start of registration so that safeguarding procedures are in place. The tutor will call the register, recording a mark for each student onto SIMs. Students arriving to school after 8.42am but before 9am will be marked as late and receive a 20 minute detention with their Form Tutor at the end of the day.
- PM registration will be called at the start of the Tutor Period.
- Form tutors should only use present, absent or late when registering students and any pre-existing registration codes should not be overwritten.
- The Student Services Manager, Head of Year and Pastoral Support Manager are all able to amend codes accordingly.
- The Student Services Manager and Pastoral Support Managers monitor the am and pm registration process. A combined effort is undertaken to visit individual teachers to instruct them to take their register. The student Services Manager also sends reminder emails directly to staff members throughout the day. The law is being broken if two registrations are not taken during the school day and this could potentially be a safeguarding issue.

Lateness

- Students arriving after 8.42am and up until 9am should go straight to their registration period where they will be marked late. On days when their form is in assembly, the students should go directly to the assembly hall where their PSM will sign them in on a late sheet. This register will be given to the Student Services Manager at the end of assembly.
- Form Tutors must set a 20 minute detention after school for any students arriving after 8.42am. Those arriving after 9am will go straight to Student Services to sign in and reminded to attend a late detention
- Any student who arrives after 9:00a.m. will need to sign in at student services where they will also receive a 20-minute detention and a late mark. Students arriving after 9:30am will be recorded as an unauthorised late
- Student Services will make an entry on SIMs for any students who arrive late
- A Parent Pay message will be sent home at the end of the week for any students that have had 2 or more late to lessons.
- A Persistent lateness detention is given to students if they arrive to form late 3 times in a week and/or 4 late to lessons (whichever comes first)

Absence from School

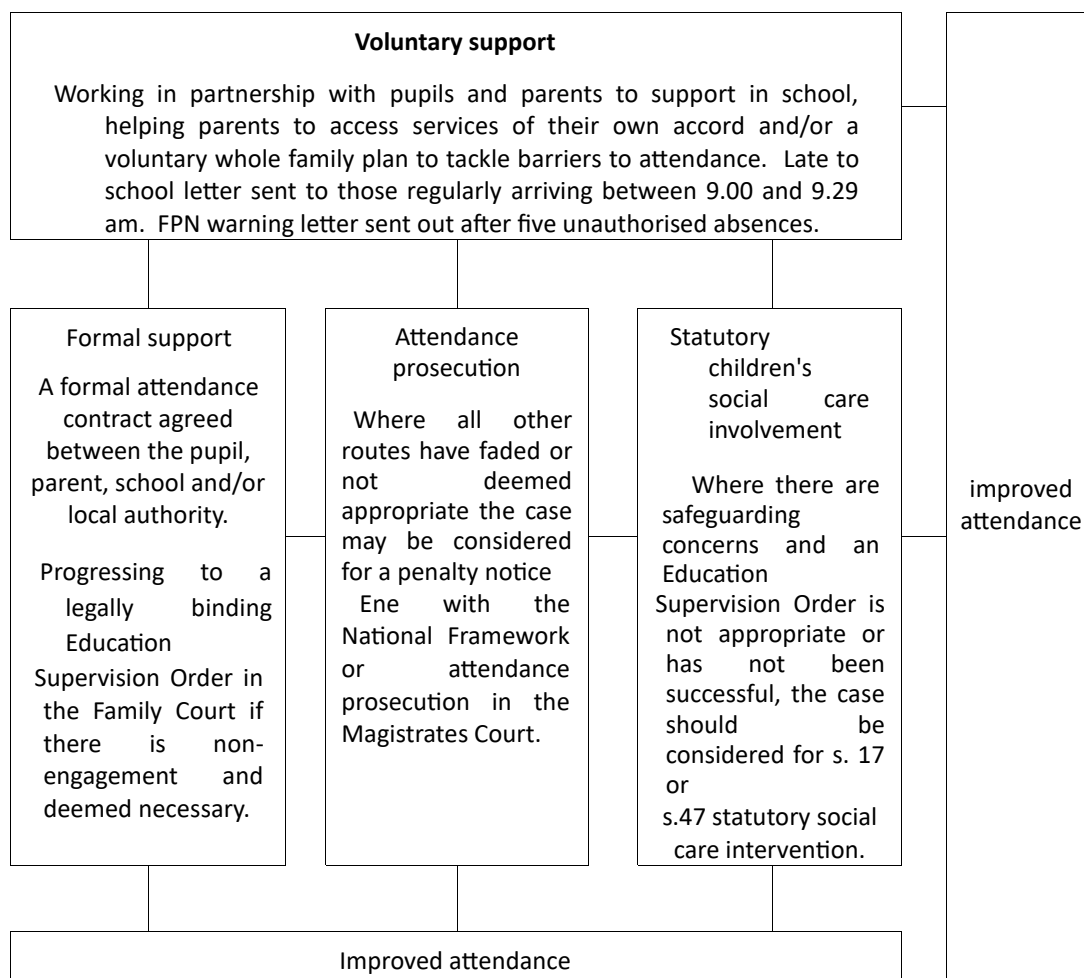
- Any absence mark left without a code of explanation is classified as an unauthorised absence.
- The Pastoral Team monitors attendance daily and will call the parent/carer(s) of an absent child if no explanation has been provided. Failure to make contact will be followed up with a text message. Email communication may be used if staff know that parents respond better to email.
- Attendance data from SIMS is exported to an attendance spreadsheet every two weeks and is colour coded to show whether a student has gone up, remained the same or gone down since the previous two weeks.
- Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Managers regularly update the spreadsheet with explanations and/or actions taken.
- Actions involve: attendance phone calls, home visits, attendance meetings, attendance letters and referrals to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Unexplained Absence from School

- The Student Services Manager automatically sends home a truancy call when the student has not registered by the end of period 2.
- Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained. At the end of the day Student Services record all code Ns to Code O
- If a parent does not communicate with school, a MyConcern must be recorded on the third day for unexplained absence.
- Persistent poor attendance will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

The threshold for a Fixed Penalty Fine is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence e.g. G, O and U codes

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



Attendance to Lessons

- A register must be taken by all staff within the first 5 minutes of every lesson and recorded on SIMs.
- If a student truants a lesson, the class teacher must log 'truancy' on SIMs and the Head of Year, when reviewing the day's behaviour, will issue a 60 minute detention. (See Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy). Where truancy from lessons is an emerging pattern, the Pastoral Team will investigate ways of offering support and monitor progress made through an attendance report.
- In exceptional circumstances, a student may be allowed out of the classroom during a lesson.

Lateness to Lessons

Any student arriving late for the lesson should be recorded as arriving late on SIMs, unless they have a valid reason. The teacher must indicate the number of minutes they arrive late.

Where there is a general pattern of lateness it is initially the responsibility of the class teacher to discuss the problem with the student concerned and set clear targets for improvement. Parents will be notified of persistent lateness to lessons.

Reporting to Parent/Carer(s)

Attendance and punctuality figures for each student will appear on the termly reports sent to parents.

All parents receive a letter at the beginning of the academic year detailing their child's attendance from the previous year. The Pastoral Team then make contact with parents and invite them in to meet with them if they are particularly concerned about students in their year group. The students are then closely monitored and regular communication maintained with the parents regarding patterns of attendance throughout the academic year.

There is a clear system of rewards for good attendance and details are published in the monthly newsletter and in the celebration assemblies at the end of each half term.

APPENDIX A

Attendance Procedures

Daily

Task	Who
Log all absence calls on the system before 9.05	ETM
Ensure a.m. registers are taken before close of registration	Form Tutors
Lates and issuing detentions and log on SIMS	ETM
At the start of p1, check that unauthorised absences are not present	PSM
Call all unauthorised absentees and log on SIMS	PSM
Call authorised absences who are a concern and log on SIMS	ETM/PSM
Absent students who have been referred to EWO must receive 'O' without medical evidence	ETM/PSM/HOY
Print off registers in case of a fire drill and hand them in to Student Services	ETM
Ensure p.m. registers are taken before close of registration	Form Tutors
Upload medical evidence and input relevant codes on SIMS	PSM
email missed register report to SLT and relevant HoFs at the end of the day	ETM

Weekly

Task	Who
Process leave of absence request forms	TSS
Once accepted or rejected, return to CNK to write letter – copies to PSM	SSL
If rejected, names are placed onto the leave of absence spreadsheet. Red flag on SIMS	PSM
Rejection letter is uploaded on SIMS and original in the student file	PSM
Check spreadsheet and issue FPN if absent on days requested	TSS/SSL

Fortnightly

Task	Who
Review attendance spreadsheet	TSS
Meet with PSMs to discuss actions and next steps	TSS / PSM
Meet with EWO	TSS
Attendance phone calls and log on SIMS interventions / update spreadsheet	PSM
Attendance meetings and log on SIMS interventions	HOY /PSM
Write and send attendance letters and log on SIMS interventions	SSL/PSM
Upload attendance letters on SIMS	PSM

Half Termly

Task	Who
100% attendance wheel of fortune for celebration assemblies	TSS
£10 voucher x 5 for celebration assemblies	TSS
Issue any Fixed Penalty Notices	TSS/SSL

Termly

Task	Who
100% attendance postcards	ETM
News letter article	BNL/TSS
Meeting with Attendance Support Team Officer	TSS

APPENDIX B

Positive strategies to promote attendance by creating a positive climate for learning

Procedure	Staff responsible
Subject staff to promote positive attendance by: • Planning and implementing effective starters and plenaries to reinforce learning. • Welcoming students into the classroom and praising them for punctuality and being ready for learning. • Delivering lessons that are fully inclusive, value everyone and where all students feel as though they are making progress. • Promote next lesson's work at the end of the lesson to encourage motivation and engagement of all learners.	All teachers All teachers All teachers All teachers
Tutors to promote positive attendance by: • Welcoming students and promoting good organization. • Using registration to discuss any issues related to behavior, attendance and punctuality. • Raising student's awareness of attendance by ensuring they use SIMS data to review attendance and set half termly attendance targets if necessary. • Encouraging students to arrive early to school to extend their activities through the promotion of extra-curricular activities and the breakfast club. • Providing extra support for students if necessary i.e. referral to SENCO, school counsellor, EWO or external agencies.	Tutors Tutors Parents/Students/Heads of Year All teachers Pastoral Team

Appendix A continued	Procedure	Staff responsible
The Pastoral Team to promote positive attendance by: Promoting the importance and value of good attendance in assemblies. Encouraging tutors to display Tutor Group attendance every half term. • Congratulating excellent attendance (95% or above over a ½ term period). • Regarding 90-95% attendance, stressing the need for excellent attendance. • Regarding 93%> attendance, stressing the need for improvements, intensive support and monitoring for persistent absence. • Reward trips for students with high attendance (>95%) and excellent A2L grades in the summer term.		HOY/PSM Tutors HOY/PSM HOY EWO HOY
Continually update policies that allow students to feel that school is a safe, fully inclusive and welcoming environment where all students can be successful.		SLT

Target Group	Procedure	Staff Responsible
Students whose attendance is of concern at primary school	• Identify students from primary school data who have attendance concerns and ensure that early intervention and monitoring is put in place from the start of Year 7.	Head of Year and Pastoral Support Manager
Persistently absent students whose attendance 90%> (This results in an average of 1 grade reduction at GCSE level)	• Identify students and begin Pastoral Interventions which may include a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer. Parents will be informed that absences without explanations or frequent absences without medical evidence, will result in an unauthorised absence (O).	Head of Year

Students who fall into the above categories and show no improvement within a half term	• If after half a term, there has not been a significant improvement, parent/carers will be invited in to meet Pastoral Team/EWO. Difficulties/strategies will be discussed and warnings will be given regarding fixed penalties. • If after one term there is still little improvement, the EWO will be encouraged to pursue further action e.g. Fixed penalty. • Termly initiative targeting Persistent Absenteeism students with attendance between 85-92%. £50 Prize Drawer as incentive and education re: impact of low attendance on academic achievement.	Pastoral Team and Targeted Youth Support EWO TSS
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Target Group	Procedure	Staff Responsible
Students that are suffering from Emotionally Based School Avoidance	• Direct telephone contact between parent/carers and key workers in school. Agree expectations regarding frequency of contact and set realistic response times. • Early home visits if appropriate to discuss the C/YP's EBSA • All parties to agree to actions and keep to them until the next review period • A personalised programme for each C/YP person • Ensuring the C/YP person has access to an identified member of staff who can be approached if anxiety becomes temporarily overwhelming in school (i.e. a key adult), • Ensuring all staff (including temporary/seasonal staff) are informed about the C/YPs needs, particularly during changes of classes/key stages • Identifying a safe place or base in school that the C/YP can go to if needed • Consideration of family support • The presence of intervention to support the child/young person manage feelings of anxiety.	PSM/ HOY DSL/ Deputy DSL SENDCo/ School Counsellor HOY HOY/PSM DSL/ Deputy DSL SENDCo/ School Counsellor

Appendix C

REWARDS FOR ATTENDANCE

FORTNIGHTLY

HOY & PSM	Monitor the attendance spreadsheet and inform CSK which students need an attendance letter.
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HALF TERMLY

HOY	Celebrate students with 100% attendance in celebration assemblies and use a random name picker to select a student with 100% from every year group to win a £10 voucher.
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TERMLY

RDS	To send out 100% attendance postcards for the term.
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YEARLY

RDS	Sept - send out previous year's attendance letter to all parents' in years 8 to 11.
PASTORAL TEAM	July - send out 100% attendance for the year congratulations letter from Head Teacher.
HEADTEACHER	At the end of the year all 99 - 100% students for that year have a photo taken with the Head Teacher published in the school newsletter

Appendix D

Codes for Recording Attendance

Code U: If a pupil is recorded with code N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to record them as absent using code U.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority. .

Codes P or B: A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority. Schools must also record the nature of the provision.

- attending courses at college
- attending unregistered alternative provision.

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

Code W: Attending work experience

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

- Where the local authority have granted a licence for the pupil to take part in a performance regulated by section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.
- Where a pupil does not need a licence for such a performance because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, including where a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the pupil has been issued by the local authority in whose area the performance will take place or the Secretary of State.
- Where a Justice of the Peace has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

Code D: Dual registered at another school

- The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis.
- The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up.
- This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance to avoid double counting.

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

- All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence should not and, from a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.
- Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only grant such a leave of absence under regulation 11(11), where an application is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- Pregnant pupils

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code R: Religious observance

- The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves).
- As a general rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to record the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
- If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

- The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.
- Schools are not expected to routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness absences. Schools should only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where they need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that code I is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the pupil is not in school for the session in question. In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be that evidence and can be accepted without question or concern. Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence.
- Where medical evidence is deemed necessary, schools should not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and should speak to the family about what evidence is available. Schools should be mindful that requesting additional medical evidence unnecessarily places pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointment system, particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional. Where a parent cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, schools should take this into account. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence the school should have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may in itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

- The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school on disciplinary grounds, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed e.g. due to adverse weather

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

- in police detention
- remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
- detained under a sentence of detention.

Code Y7: If they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e. non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day.

386. Schools are expected to communicate with the pupil's Youth Offending Team worker while the pupil is in custody and remains on the school roll to discuss the pupil's educational needs, progress and return to the school upon their release where appropriate. Education is a key part of effective resettlement, therefore it is important that schools maintain contact with the Youth Offending Team throughout the sentence to support the child's resettlement where appropriate. 90

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances

Code U: Arrived in school after 9:30am

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole school closure

Appendix E

Off Roll Notification Form

Please complete when deleting a compulsory school-age child from the school roll
If you have any questions about the off roll form, please contact EWT@barnet.gov.uk

You must give ONE reason for removal from roll from the list on page 2.

DATE OFF ROLL		SCHOOL		CTF ISSUED?	Y ☐ N ☐
Pupil Surname			Pupil Forename		
Gender	M ☐ F ☐	Year Group		DOB	
Parents Full Name					
Home address including post code					
Telephone			Borough of residence		
Email			Last Day child attended school:		
Other parent details					
New home address					
Telephone			Borough of residence		
Email			Date of move to new address:		
Does the child have an EHCP	Y ☐ N ☐		BELS SEND Officer Link:		
Does the child have any Social Care involvement	Y ☐ N ☐		Social Worker/Early Help Practitioner:		
Important information about this child:					

Referrer	
Position	
Date	
Address/e-mail	

Please return the off-roll notification form to EWT via USO-FX.

REASON FOR DELETION *(please tick as applicable)*

Registered at another school	A	☐	School / provision named			
Not moving to Reception from Nursery	B	☐	Name of school		Start date	
Registered at one or more other schools and all schools agree the deletion	C	☐	Name of school		Start date	
LA changing provision via School Attendance Order	D	☐	Name of school		Start date	
School Attendance Order had been revoked by LA	E	☐	Name of school		Start date	
Elective Home Education	F	☐	LA notified by school (see note 1 below)	Y ☐ N ☐	Date	
Elective Home Education, supplementary information to be provided:			• Attendance - past three full academic terms • Fixed term exclusions – past three full academic terms • Permanent exclusions – any history • SEN information • Parent letter of intent to electively home educate • Minutes of exit meeting			
Pupil no longer lives reasonable distance from the school	G	☐	New Address provided	Y ☐ N ☐		
Failure to return from leave of absence	H	☐	Date of original CMS referral			
Continually absent for 20 days or more	I	☐	Date of original CMS referral			
Pupil is detained under a sentence of detention	J	☐	To be agreed with LA			
Pupil has died	K	☐				

Pupil over compulsory school age	L	☐		
Pupil is a boarder at a school maintained by the LA or academy and fees have not been paid	M	☐		
Pupil has ceased to be a pupil at an independent school or non-maintained	N			
Permanent Exclusion	O	☐		

Appendix F

Child Missing from School (CMS) Referral Form Academic Year 2024-25

School		Date of last attendance	
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CHILD'S DETAILS

Surname					Forename			
Date of birth		Year		Male/Female		Ethnicity		
Looked-after child ☐ Child Protection Plan ☐ Child in Need ☐ CAF ☐ SEN ☐								

Home address			
Postcode		Borough of residence	
Parent / Carer		Tel number(s)	

Reason for referral	Tick as applicable	Additional information required
ABSENT FOR TEN SCHOOL DAYS	☐	LAST DAY OF ATTENDANCE
ABSENT FOR FIVE DAYS FOLLOWING AGREED RETURN DATE FROM LEAVE	☐	AGREED RETURN DATE
PUPIL REFUSING TO ATTEND OR PARENT REFUSING TO SEND	☐	ATTACH ATTENDANCE RECORD

Relevant information (please include details of any concerns about child's safety / welfare). [This must be completed](#)

You must attach the child's attendance record.

Referrer: Position: Date: I will update the EWO or CME officer with any new information concerning the family.	Return form by USO-FX or secure e-mail to Charlotte Winston, Children Missing Education Officer, Barnet Education & Learning Service 2 Bristol Avenue, London NW9 4EW Tel: 020 8359 2838
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Appendix G

Application for Leave of Absence for Students

(Please see note on following page)

I should like to make an application for leave of absence from school for my child:

(Please use a separate form for each child)

Name of student:		Tutor Group:
Date (from):	Date (to):	

A total of school days (*excluding weekends and school closures*) or part day:

Morning (time): _____

Afternoon (time): _____

Reason for making the request (please attach evidence):

[illegible]

Name: *(in block letters)*

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Address:

Phone Number: _____

Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer) Date: _____

Please return this form to the School Office

Student's Name: _____

Tutor Group: _____

Approved ☐

Attendance Code ☐

Not Approved* ☐

Absence dates: __/__/__ to __/__/__

*If applicable, the school does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason(s):

Learning that will be missed	
The time and duration of the leave	
No exceptional circumstances	
Leave could have been taken during school holiday periods	

Signed: _____

Ms S. Thomas Assistant Head Teacher

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. It is school policy that, except in extreme circumstances, permission to take a student out of school for a holiday, trip or any other purpose will not be granted. The government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware, unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Appendix H

Request to issue Penalty Notice The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Name of School / Agency:	Friern Barnet School
Person Making Referral:	
Telephone Number:	
Fax Number:	
E-Mail Address:	

Parents to be issued with Penalty Notice	Parent* 1	Parent* 2
Parent's* First Name:		
Parent's* Family Name:		
Address of Parent(s):		
Post Code:		
Telephone number(s):		
Address of Parent not living at main address: <i>(to be provided only if parent is to be issued with fine)</i>		
Post Code:		
Telephone number(s):		

Name of Child:	
Date of Birth of Child:	
Year / Class Name:	
Reason for Penalty to be issued, including dates of period of absence:	

<u>Checklist</u> <u>[please tick]</u>	
Full names and address of all parents responsible for the absence*:	☐
Copies of correspondence sent to/from the parents relating to incident attached (if applicable):	☐
Attendance printout showing unauthorised absences:	☐
Dates of Absences in reason for Penalty to be issued:	☐

Signed:	
Date:	

- Please upload to Jo Barnfield via USO-FX
**for definition of Parent see Local Code of Conduct.*

Appendix I

Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Practice.

This Code of Practice governs the application of penalty notices issued to parents for school attendance matters in accordance with **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and subsequent amendments.**

Headteachers continue to have the power to authorise leave of absence, but only in exceptional circumstances. While family holidays are enriching experiences, the school year is designed to give families the opportunity for these breaks without having to disrupt their children's education. It is for schools to consider the specific details and relevant context behind each request. Schools know their pupils best and are well placed to make those judgements.

The circumstances in which a penalty notice can be issued are set out in Table 1.

The Power to Issue:

By local agreement between schools, the police and the London Borough of Barnet, Barnet Education & Learning Service is the only agency administering penalty notices in respect of school-related issues.

Headteachers decide whether to authorise leave taken during term time or not: and, if not, whether then to request a penalty notice from Barnet Education Learning Service.

The Regulations allow Headteachers to delegate their decision-making power to request penalty notices to Deputy and Assistant Headteachers or equivalent.

Method of Issue:

All penalty notices are issued by post only.

The Education Welfare Team maintains a record of penalty notices issued within the London Borough of Barnet's finance system. Schools must not keep records of penalty notices on children's academic records.

Timescale for issue:

Schools: To issue request within **three school weeks** of child returning to school.

BELS: To issue penalty notice within **three school weeks** of the request

Parent: To pay penalty notice within **28 DAYS** of penalty notice invoice

Dispute: to be resolved **within** the four-week payment period for parents.

Failure to pay:

Parents who fail to pay are liable to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.
A summons must be requested within six months of the first date of absence.

Declining to issue:

The Education Welfare Team may decline to issue a penalty notice if

- The incorrect code has been entered into the register for the period of leave
- If schools cannot substantiate the leave during term time
- If there is an error made on any of the information received from the school

Cancelling penalty notices:

The Education Welfare Team cancels penalty notices when suitable evidence is provided by the parent or, indeed, by the school itself that the notice has been issued incorrectly.

The Education Welfare Team Manager will write off cases where litigation is impractical or not in the public interest.

Income:

Income from penalty notices funds their enforcement. Where income exceeds costs, the surplus passes to the Council's general account. Schools receive no income from penalty notices.

Good Practice for Schools:

Head teachers should ensure that:

- Parents are aware of the school's policy on leave of absence
- Each request for leave of absence is considered on its merits
- Parents are informed of the reasons for refusal of their request
- Parents failing to request leave of absence should be issued with a penalty notice
- The child is of statutory school age
- Requests for penalty notices for absences adjacent to school holidays have supporting evidence, such as parents not being contactable, international dial tones, or evidence from individuals, including the child in question.
- Exclusion correspondence reminds parents of their duty to supervise their excluded child during the first five days of exclusion
- Only they, or those authorised by them, may sign the request form
- School registers have the appropriate registration absence code (**G, O, U, or E, as appropriate**) as an extract from the register may be required in the event of court action.
- they should liaise with colleagues at the schools attended by siblings.

Head teachers are not compelled to request the issuing of a penalty notice even if they have refused to give leave of absence but should be mindful of the need for a consistent approach across all schools to support colleagues for whom attendance issues are of significant concern.

Good Practice for Parents:

Parents should:

- Follow the school's attendance policy
- Make a request for leave of absence in good time so that it can be considered
- Make travel arrangements AFTER permission has been given
- Keep all travel documents and invoices to account for delays or disruptions
- Make sure that they obtain medical evidence if their child is ill in the periods either side of an official school holiday
- Ensure they can be contacted by school during periods of illness
- Understand that, if school or Education Welfare staff visit the family home and the child is not there when reportedly too ill to attend school, a penalty notice will be issued.

Information for Parents:

A parent is defined by **Section 576 of the Education Act 1996** as any natural parent, person with Parental Responsibility under the **Children Act 1989** or a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of his or her relationship with the child.

All parents whose children attend a maintained, academy or independent school in Barnet are subject to the rules in respect of penalty notices.

For leave during term time, unauthorised absence and lateness:

Parents can be issued a maximum of 2 penalty notices each in three academic years, the threshold for a fixed penalty notice to be issued for unauthorised absence is a minimum of 10 sessions (5 days) in a 10-week period.

The first penalty notice is £80 if paid within the early-payment period, up to the 21st day after issue, rising to £160 up to the 28th day.

Where a penalty notice has been issued to the parent in respect of the same child previously, the amount of the second penalty will rise to £160.

On payment of a penalty notice, the parent cannot be pursued legally for the same period of evidence.

As with prosecution in a magistrates' court, penalty notices can only apply to offences relating to a child of statutory school age enrolled at a maintained school, academy, independent school or a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

For a child found in a public place without parental supervision whilst excluded:

The first penalty notice is £60 if paid within the early-payment period, up to the 21st day after issue, rising to £120 up to the 28th day.

Disputing a penalty notice:

There is no right of appeal for parents but the Local Authority will examine any evidence provided that shows that a mistake has been made. Parents will be required to provide documentary evidence to support an argument and must deal directly with the Local Authority as the matter will not be the responsibility of the school.

Recipients are advised to contact the Education Welfare Team by e-mail or in writing, using contact details on their invoice with any queries about payment or the reason for the penalty notice.

Penalty notices can only be withdrawn if they are issued in error or there are exceptional circumstances that common law would accept. The Local Authority must refund any payments made in respect of a wrongly-issued penalty notice.

Parents with a credible claim not to have received a penalty notice may have the original replaced by a new notice, allowing time to pay the initial, lower, amount. Generally, however, a notice issued by second-class post is deemed to have been received within three to four days.

Penalty notices are used in the following circumstances at the request of the relevant party, as described below:

		Reason	School action	Requesting party
1	Term time Absence without the school's or academy's permission	A parent removes a child from school for the purpose of a holiday of any duration either without seeking the Head Teacher's permission or in defiance of the Head Teacher refusing such permission. Registration code: G A parent takes a child out of school to visit a home country for personal reasons not deemed to be exceptional. Registration code: G	Head teachers must decide whether or not to authorise requests for leave of absence on a case-by-case basis. There must not be a blanket ban on leave of absence. A decision not to give leave of absence should be explained by letter to the parent. Parents taking their children to countries of origin have no right to do so in term-time. While being mindful of cultural differences, head teachers should consider those parents' legal responsibility to ensure their children attend fully. Where a penalty notice is requested, the Head Teacher must ensure that the school's register is coded G.	Head Teachers, and those delegated by them. The request form must be completed by the Head Teacher or delegated senior colleague Head teachers are not compelled to request the issuing of a penalty notice even if they have refused to give leave of absence but should be mindful of the need for a consistent approach across all schools to support colleagues for whom attendance issues are of significant concern.

2	Unauthorised lateness to school	A parent regularly fails to ensure a child is in school before the closure of registers. Registration code: U	Schools must advise parents in writing of the possible imposition of a penalty notice if their child has 10 unauthorised lates (U) in a 10-week period. The request for the penalty notice must contain the original warning letter and the attendance register for the review period with the trigger number of U codes. <i>There must be liaison between the school and the Education Welfare Officer (if applicable) where the latter is already involved in casework with the parents to avoid legal confusion.</i>	Head Teachers, and those delegated by them. The request form must be completed by the Head Teacher or delegated senior colleague
3	Casework by EWT, school or academy.	A parent fails to improve his or her child's school attendance following casework carried out by an Education Welfare Officer or equivalent member of staff appointed by the principal of an academy Absences to attend political protests of any kind should not be authorised. Registration code: O and/or U (including G with no FPN issued by school)	A penalty notice may be used as a disposal by the Chair of a Court Assessment Meeting in place of prosecution or the use of an Education Supervision Order. The right to protest does not override a parent's duty to ensure school attendance.	Chair of Legal Meeting (member of the Education Welfare Team) Headteacher, Deputy or Assistant Head.

4	Inadequate parental supervision of excluded pupil	A parent fails to ensure that his or her child is adequately supervised during the first five days of an exclusion Registration code: E, converted to O for court purposes. (E is an authorised absence, where parental supervision is expected)	The Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 103 permits the use of penalty notices where an excluded pupil is found in a public place unsupervised by a parent during the first five days of an exclusion. If an excluded pupil is encountered by more than one agency on the same day, only one offence will have been committed. Where a penalty notice is requested, the Head Teacher must ensure that the school's register is coded E for the period of exclusion	Head Teacher, Principal or delegated colleague, Police Officer, or Community Police Support Officer Education Welfare Officer
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Guidance on categories where a penalty notice is applicable

1 Unauthorised leave of absence from school – CODE G.

All parents should request permission from the Head Teacher in advance of their leave, the Head will then decide whether to grant permission. Where there has been no request for leave, the Head must write to the parents detailing whether the leave is authorised and the possibility of a FPN being applied.

Schools must provide the original request for leave where applicable, the letter provided to parents stating the leave was unauthorised and a fine may be applied and the attendance certificate along with the FPN request.

If a penalty notice requested by a school is unpaid and the case is referred to the Magistrates' Court, the requesting colleague would be the relevant witness and will write a statement and/or be required to attend court.

2 Unauthorised lateness to school – CODE U.

The Local Authority has set a trigger point for schools to use when seeking a penalty notice for lateness. Parents must be informed individually of this possibility. Schools should remind **all** parents of the time registers are closed, after which the U code becomes effective.

A penalty notice can be issued if the child has had 10 unauthorised lates.

The request for the penalty notice must contain the original warning letter sent to parents and the attendance register for the review period with the trigger number of U codes.

3 EWT and school/academy casework.- CODE O/U/G

A penalty notice may be used as a disposal by the Chair of a Legal Meeting in place of prosecution or the use of an Education Supervision Order.

No consideration is given in respect of an individual school's policy in this case.

Where academies work independently of the EWT, they should have a process where a senior leader makes a Legal Meeting-type decision.

4 Inadequate parental supervision of an excluded pupil – CODE E.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 103 permits the use of penalty notices where an excluded pupil is found in a public place unsupervised by a parent during the first five days of exclusion. A public place includes school premises. Exclusion correspondence should include reference to the possibility of this sanction.

If an excluded pupil is encountered by more than one agency on the same day, only one offence will have been committed.

Police Officers and Community Police Support Officers use their own recording procedures, generating reports (Merlin) that the Education Welfare Team will check against the relevant school register. Penalty notices will be issued once these details are verified.

Dealing with requests for leave of absence:

All requests for leave of absence should be decided on a case-by-case basis. Requests from parents should be provided in good time and not last minute to allow for an opportunity to respond.

School staff regularly observe that parents' explanations for their children's absences are difficult to believe. Claims of lost passports, delayed flights and illness are common. Asking for details of original flights and any amendments acts as a useful check before requesting a penalty notice.

Requests for leave due to grave illness of a relative should be treated sympathetically unless the school identifies a pattern of leave at the same time every year or the death of the same relative, leave taken, and reasons provided can be kept as logs to help identify patterns.

Dealing with failure to request leave of absence:

Parents often fail to ask for permission from schools for their children to be absent, perhaps knowing that their request is unlikely to be agreed. All holidays taken in this way are subject to penalty notice regulations.

Parents who take leave without asking for permission, should be informed in writing, that the leave was unauthorised, and they are liable for a fixed penalty notice.

Parents who claim that they had to leave in an emergency should be asked for proof of the emergency and travel documents that show late (and, therefore emergency) booking. In any event, most parents have access to phones and/or e-mail.

Dealing with sickness absence:

Many schools report spikes in medical absences around school holidays and should bear in mind:

- Lack of response to calls home
- International dialling tones
- Absence of child/family if a home visit is made
- Observations from school community or the child concerned.
- School attendance of siblings in different schools

Dealing with absence adjacent to religious holidays:

Taking extra time around recognised religious observances is not acceptable and should be coded **G**. Schools should consider the use of penalty notices for those who fail to ask for leave of absence beyond

the actual religious observance. There may, of course, be occasions when a request for additional leave is deemed by the head teacher to be valid.

Legal references

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

Education Act 1996

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024