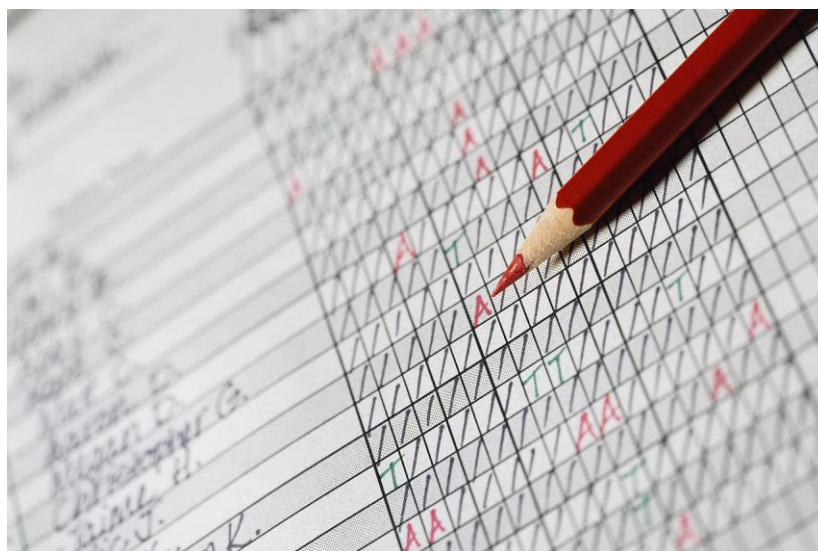


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# Balby Central Primary School



## ***ATTENDANCE MATTERS***

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# BALBY CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance Matters Policy

### Introduction

#### Attendance Matters

Here at Balby Central Primary School we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school on time, every day, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Missing school means missing out. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is **everybody's responsibility** - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how **together** we will achieve this.

#### Why regular attendance is so important:

##### Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

##### Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

##### Legal

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is **your legal responsibility** and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result

in prosecution.

## **The Law Relating to Attendance and Safeguarding**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

### **The Law relating to Safeguarding**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

## **Absence Procedures**

It is your responsibility to inform school if your child is going to be absent. If your child is absent you **must**:

- Contact us before 9.30am on the first day of absence or
- Call into school and report your child's absence to the office staff who will ensure their class teacher and the Attendance Officer is then informed.

If your child is absent and you have failed to contact us, we will:

1. Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
2. Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer, learning Mentor or Head Teacher if absences persist
3. Refer the matter to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Officer if attendance deteriorates.

## **Contact Information**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including emergencies, so we need to have your correct contact information and up to date phone numbers at all times. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date phone number.

## **Punctuality**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

8.00 am	Breakfast club opens
8.30 am	School gates open and playground is supervised
8.40 am	Class room doors open – children have access to early morning work and a chance for children to get a great start to their day.
8.45	Children are expected to be in class ready to start working
8.50	Classroom doors are closed and registers are marked – children are ready so teaching can begin promptly
After 8.50	Children will be marked late

Lessons start at **8.50am** and we expect your child to be in class, ready to start work, by **8.45am**

### How we manage lateness

At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with local authority guidelines, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence for the morning session. This may mean that you could face the possibility of Education Welfare Team intervention and a Fixed Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you may be asked to meet with the School Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. If the problem cannot be resolved a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer for further support or action.

### Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required immediately by the school.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which **unavoidably** fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school instigating the use of sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get marked in the register
- Shopping, looking after other children, birthdays or other unnecessary reasons
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Any absence when attendance has fallen below 95%, unless we receive medical evidence.

## Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for **whatever reason**. Absence at this level (90% and below) does considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All PA cases are also made known to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

## Education Welfare Service

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. Please work with us by attending any meetings you are invited to. Think about the message avoiding meetings sends to your child. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the next step is to refer the child to the **Education Welfare Service**. A designated Education Welfare Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01302 736504

## Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by **not taking children away in school time**. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The school has a clear policy on taking holidays in term time or time off for extended overseas visits. Parents must complete a holiday form, to be submitted at least two weeks before the date when they want the period of absence to start. The school is unable to authorise holidays other than in exceptional circumstances. There are clear guidelines for making holiday requests and clear procedures relating to the authorisation of any such request. **Fixed penalty notices** will be issued if they do not comply.

## Fixed Penalty Notices

*Under the provisions of subsection (1) of section 23 of the anti-social behaviour act 2003, it will now be possible that in certain cases of unauthorised absence a fixed penalty notice may be issued to the parents/carers responsible. Under these provisions the penalty is £60 if paid within 28 day of receipt of the notice rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but with 42 days of receipt.*

*Non payment of the penalty notice will trigger prosecution under section 444 of the Education act 1996 on the basis that the parent has failed to secure regular attendance. Further information relating to fixed penalty notices can be obtained from [welfare.service@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:welfare.service@doncaster.gov.uk)*

## Promoting Good Attendance and Our Targets

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is **everybody's responsibility** - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Inform you via information in our newsletter or website of our school attendance statistics
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and rewards

## School Targets

The Local Authority has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school. The **minimum** level of attendance for this school is **95.5% attendance** and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Through the school year we analyse absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. This information is reported to the Governing Body at each full board meeting.

## Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.