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[www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk](http://www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk)

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am sure you have all seen school attendance recently having a high profile within the media and the focus the Government are having on this presently. Naturally, this focus feeds back into schools and impacts policies and decision making within our school.

Ensuring that all children attend school regularly is of huge importance to all and I know that parents and carers do value the importance of good attendance for their children at our school.

We regularly monitor attendance in school and work closely with our families where attendance is a concern, to try and unlock any barriers. Termly, parents and carers are notified of their child's attendance where it has fallen below 95%. Attendance which falls below 90% is classed as 'persistent absence'. Where this occurs, we will invite parents and carers into school to discuss this further. We pride ourselves on knowing our families well and being able to work together collaboratively, in order to support all aspects of children's education and wellbeing by improving attendance.

Expectations on schools to ensure that every child's attendance is a priority has increased somewhat and there are further increased expectations from the Department for Education which come into force in August 2024.

With this in mind, our Attendance Policy has been updated to reflect this and will be further updated in the new school year in line with the new statutory requirements. This can be found on our website or by following this link: [https://www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk/serve\\_file/26684069](https://www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk/serve_file/26684069)

The key things which we have always asked of our families, continue to be the same:

**ENSURING THAT CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL EVERY DAY** (unless too ill to do so).

**ENSURING THAT CHILDREN ARRIVE TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY ON TIME**

The school day starts at 8.55am each morning. By this time, we expect children to be settled within their classrooms ready to learn. From 8.55am, every class takes part in a Blast Session before Worship. During these sessions, key skills are practiced and consolidated where classroom based staff have the time to support children with this. This is a crucial part of the learning experience for your child/ren. Also, when a child arrives late, this can be unsettling as they are entering their classroom or worship where everyone else is settled and focused. School opens its door at 8.45am, 10 minutes before the start of the school day, this gives children opportunities to socialise and chat with their peers; supporting effective friendships. Missing this opportunity regularly can impact children's friendships.

*Working with the Diocese of Leeds and the Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale  
May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed Psalm 20:4*



**IF YOUR CHILD IS TOO ILL TO ATTEND SCHOOL, PLEASE NOTIFY US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** (using the School Spider system) detailing the reason for absence. Please be as specific as possible when reporting this e.g high temperature, vomiting, diarrhoea, chicken pox rather than just stating unwell or ill. This is an important factor for a number of reasons; we have duty to monitor illness across school and where needed, notify families of potential infectious illness and in some cases, we have to notify Public Health.

From a safeguarding perspective, we must be aware of children not attending school each day and the reasons why. Where we have not been made aware of this, we follow our First Day Calling Procedures. This involves sending a message to families to ascertain a reason for absence. If contact still has not been made by 9.15am, telephone calls will be made to all contacts we hold. If no contact is still not made, the school will conduct a home visit.

**ENSURE THAT ROUTINE MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS ARE TAKEN OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS.** We acknowledge that for certain appointments e.g hospital or emergency appointments, this may not always be possible. However, for routine appointments such as dental checkups, eye tests etc, these should be booked outside of school time. Where this is not the case, this absence may be unauthorised; we have seen absences for routine appointments increase exponentially of late. Where appointments cannot be made in the school holiday periods, we ask that early morning or end of day appointments are made so that the absence from school is time limited so as to maximise learning time.

For any appointments where a child needs to be absent from school, we request that parents and carers provide the school with the evidence of the appointment to support the decision-making process on authorisation of the request. A form requesting a leave of absence for medical appointments can be found on the school website, using the link below.

**TO ONLY REQUEST A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.** This should always be a request and not a notification. Any requests should be done as far as possible in advance preferably using the Exceptional Leave of Absence Form.

Any forms for leave of absence can be found on the school website or by following the link below. Documents are in PDF and editable word formats. Term dates can also be found on this page.

<https://www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk/page/term-dates-uniform-order-form-leave-of-absence-appointment-and-medication-forms/129582>

**General family holidays in term time can never be considered an exceptional circumstance.** By law, Headteachers are unable to authorise absences for this reason. It is appreciated that cost savings can be made by taking a holiday outside of school time, but the detrimental impact on a child's education by missing school can be massive. Where family holidays are taken during term time, school may refer to the Local Authority for a penalty notice. Penalty notices may be issued due to the deliberate taking of leave of absence in term time without or against school permission (where it can be demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions (5 days).

From September 2024, there will be a national framework for penalty notices introduced. The threshold for issuing a penalty notice will be 10 sessions (or 5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

The full document regarding school attendance for the next academic year can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf)

In order for every child to realise their individual potential, strong levels of attendance are critical. Thank you for your cooperation in enabling us to support your child/ren to be their very best.

**We Believe, We Nurture, We Succeed!**

Kind regards



Mrs Becky Schofield      Headteacher