



July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Information regarding the Department for Education Changes to Attendance from September 2024

As we approach the end of the academic year, firstly I would like to thank you for your support and the contribution that both you and your child have made to Barnwood Park's community this year.

Whilst I'm sure that we are all looking forward to a lovely relaxing and hopefully warm summer break, we do also have to start thinking ahead to September. The Department for Education (DfE) has introduced some significant changes to their guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', whilst the majority of these changes are primarily related to policies and procedures within schools and local authorities, there are several important changes that will impact on you, as parents or carers.

Changes to the Close of Morning (AM) Registration

In September, Morning Greeting will start at 8:40, so all students should be in school **by 08:40**. Our AM register will be taken at 08:45 and we will keep it open until 9.15am, children arriving after 08:45 will receive a late mark (L code), however, children who arrive after 9:15am will receive an unauthorised absence mark (U code).

Removal of the H Code - Authorised Holiday in Term Time

Previously, headteachers were able to authorise holidays in term time if there were exceptional circumstances. Any pupil absence due to an authorised holiday would previously have received an H code in the register. The DfE has withdrawn the H code and has stated that "***Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance***". Therefore, from September, we will no longer be able to authorise any holidays in term time. Any holidays that are taken will be recorded with a G code - Unauthorised Holiday in Term Time and you may be liable for a penalty notice.

Changes to Penalty Notices for Non School Attendance

The most significant change for both schools and their families is the changes to penalty notices for non school attendance. I have outlined these changes below.

Changes to Penalty Notices for Non School Attendance

The Department for Education (DfE) will introduce a new National Framework for Penalty Notices on 19 August 2024, this is explained in more detail in [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024](#).

Reasons for Penalty Notices/Prosecution

Term Time Leave of Absence

A school can apply to their local authority for a penalty notice if there are 5 or more days of consecutive or cumulative absence due to term time leave.

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Unauthorised Absence

A school may apply to their local authority for a penalty notice if there are 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period. These absences can be a combination of the following codes:

G - Term Time Leave of Absence

O - Unauthorised Absence - Failure to contact the school (unexplained absence) may result in an absence being recorded as unauthorised

U - Late After the Close of Registers

Who is Liable for a Penalty Notice/Prosecution

Penalty notices/prosecution are now issued/sought for each parent for each child (**per parent, per child**). Parent refers to anyone with parental responsibility and may include carers, step parents, grandparents or any other adult with parental responsibility.

For Example: If a family with three children take term time leave of absence, each parent would receive three penalty notices of £160 for each child. This would amount to £960 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £480 if paid within 21 days.

First Offence

The first time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absences the amount has increased to:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of being issued, this amount is reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days of being issued.

Second Offence

If a second penalty notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence within a three year period, there **will not** be a discount for early payment.

The penalty notice is payable at the full amount of £160 within 28 days of the date of being issued.

Third Offence/Any Further Offenses Within a Three Year Period

If there is a third instance of term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence, a penalty notice **will not** be issued.

Any further cases will be referred directly to Magistrates' Court for prosecution. Magistrates can impose a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child.

If a parent is found guilty of an offence, this is recorded as a criminal offence and will show on any DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks as "Failure to Safeguard a Child's Education"

Transition, In year Admissions and Cross Border Checks

All schools will have the ability to check for previous penalty notices/prosecutions issued within a three year period in their own local authority or any other local authority that the family has lived in at year 6 to 7 and 11 to 12 transition or for in year admissions.

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Data Sharing with The DfE and Local Authority

From September, it will be mandatory for all schools to share live data with both the Department for Education and their local authority. Schools will also have termly targeted support meetings with their local authority, to discuss pupil attendance. If schools have authorised leave in term time, local authorities may ask to see proof of exceptional circumstances and in some cases, direct schools to apply for penalty notices to be issued.

To avoid any confusion when booking holidays, I have included the terms dates for the next academic year below, these are also available on the school website.

5th September (7&11 only)	-	Fri October 25th 2024
6th Sept all years		
Tuesday 5th Nov (Mon 4th Nov Inset)	-	Fri 20th Dec 2024 (12:30 finish)
Tues 7th Jan 2025 (Mon 6th Jan Inset)	-	Fri 14th Feb 2025
Mon 24th Feb 2025	-	Fri 11th April 2025 (12:30 finish)
Mon 28th April 2025	-	Fri 23rd May 2025
Mon 2nd June 2025	-	Fri 18th July 2025 (12:30 finish)

These changes will all be detailed in our updated Attendance Policy, which will be available on the school website in the new academic year, however, if you have any questions or concerns relating to any of these changes, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a wonderful summer and look forward to a really successful year in September.

Mr Derry
Headteacher

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