

BARHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1 Roles and Responsibilities

The school governors along with the Headteacher and Education Welfare Service (EWS) will at the beginning of each school year set an attendance target for the school. This year our target is 95%. The school governors are also responsible for ensuring that pupil’s names are recorded on the school admissions and daily register. The Headteacher, Karen Giles has a responsibility to ensure that the daily register of pupils attending the school is taken and designated Attendance Monitor Rimal Jesani to monitor and report on attendance. Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. The Education Welfare Service has a duty to ensure that parents meet this responsibility and the service can seek legal redress to secure a pupil’s attendance if a parent fails in their duty.

2 Working with the Local Authority

Barham Primary works with the Education Welfare Service to help improve the attendance of all our pupils. The Attendance Monitor meets with our link Education Welfare Officer (EWO) frequently to monitor and review progress. Our Education Welfare Officer visits the school on a regular basis to advise the Attendance Monitor on managing absences, making appropriate referrals and to meet with parents. We also meet regularly with our School Improvement Partner (SIP).

3 How Our School Manages Pupil Absence

At Barham Primary the attendance of pupils is recorded electronically. This helps us to produce termly data through the School Census for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It also helps the school provide information on pupil attendance for Ofsted inspectors. Each reason for pupil absence has a special code and this assists the school to monitor persistent absentees. In our school we expect pupils to have 94% and above attendance. Parents of pupils attending this school have a responsibility to make sure their children reach or exceed 94% attendance. Through data analysis we can see which pupils fall below this threshold and take action. Children with below 90% attendance may be contacted by Rimal Jesani either by telephone or letter. Parents may be invited to school to meet with Andrea Broderick and/or Rimal Jesani. When we have exhausted our attempts to improve a pupil’s attendance, we will make a referral to our link Education Welfare Officer.

(a)Unauthorised Absences

At Barham Primary School we have an expectation that parents will telephone the school to inform us of their child’s absence. We may not accept a parent’s reason for absence especially if the child’s attendance is below 95%. Regular unauthorised absences where a parent has not provided a reason for absence mean that a parent or parents may be breaking the law and could be:

• issued with an Education penalty charge notice of £60 - £120 by the local authority

• found guilty in a magistrates court and fined up to £2,500

In very severe cases parents can be imprisoned for up to 3 months. Because school attendance is a very serious matter, we aim to have good communication about attendance matters with parents through our newsletter, structured conversations and annual reviews. If there is a problem it is better if a parent speaks with a member of staff rather than allow a situation to escalate.

(b)Regular Pupil Sickness

If a child is regularly absent due to sickness a parent may be invited to school to discuss their child’s absences, this discussion may include the EWO or school nurse. When a child is regularly absent due to illness the school will request that a parent provides medical details from their doctor before continuing to authorise further absences.

(c)Requests for Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time

Our school actively discourages parents making requests to take their children out of school during term time. The school is closed for 13 weeks of the year and parents are expected to use this time for taking holidays and visiting family abroad. We have a request form that a parent in exceptional circumstances may complete and return to the Headteacher for consideration. Parents should not under any circumstances make travel arrangements during term time without discussing it with the Headteacher first. Families, who take their children out of school for unauthorised leave during term time, risk receiving a Formal Warning, or Education Penalty Notice. Manor School has the full support of our governors and the local authority in this matter. The Headteacher’s decision is final with no right of appeal.

(d)Religious Holidays

Parents may absent their child from school on the day of the religious festival, so that children can enjoy celebrations with their families. The school is unable to sanction leave of absence for longer than one day. Parents taking children out for more than one day will have the absence recorded as unauthorised.