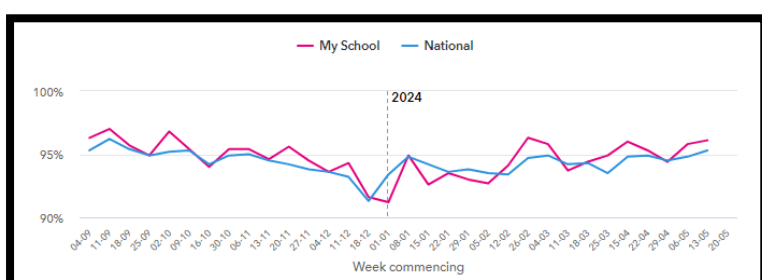




At Barnes Farm, we acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different, and we work in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us, and we believe that regular attendance and punctuality throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment. Please do come and see us if you have any concerns.

**The School Day**

- Doors Open at 8:45am
- Gates close at 8:55am
- 8:55am Register taken
- School finishes 3:15pm



**Whole School Attendance**

**94.7%**

*(0.3% above national average)*

This still means an average child at Barnes Farm misses 10 days of school every year!

### Addressing Poor Attendance

At the Barnes Farm Schools, we take pride in our pupils' attendance. Records are monitored regularly, and patterns of absence identified. We communicate with parents/carers to offer support to overcome barriers and facilitate regular attendance.

Poor attendance at school inevitably leads to poor attainment and reduced outcomes for our students. When a pupil's attendance becomes unacceptably low, contact is made with parents/carers to discuss reasons for non-attendance. Strategies are put in place and, where necessary, outside agencies can be utilised to offer guidance and support for our families. Home visits and meetings with parents/carers may take place and the involvement of the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer may be sought.

We are required, by law, to address poor attendance at school. This process entails sending letters home to parents/carers. In each of these letters there is very specific legal wording that we are required to use.

In extreme cases, if no improvement in attendance is seen, then the Local Authority will be contacted to issue a Penalty Notice for non-attendance at school. This is very much a final resort when all other avenues of help and interventions have failed. To avoid reaching this stage, we ask for full engagement and a commitment to improve from parents and pupils.

Regular communication with the school is vital to ensure that families can receive the support they need to facilitate regular attendance.

If your child's attendance starts to fall below 90%, the school will notify you and work to ensure that attendance goes back up. In the event where a child's attendance continues to

*90% might be a fantastic high score in a test....*

*90% attendance rate is NOT.*

*It means that your child is missing the equivalent of 20 days of school!*

fall, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified, and appropriate action will be taken. Attendance is monitored very closely on a weekly basis. If a child's attendance does fall below this level, they are considered to be persistently absent or severely absent if it falls under 50%.



## **Punctuality**

Children must be in school on time, this means being in the classroom and ready to learn by 8.50am when the registers are taken. When a child arrives late for school, they miss the introduction to the day and valuable learning time such as Phonics lessons and Morning Challenges.

If your child arrives after the gates have closed, they need to report to the office where they will be marked as 'L' for arriving late.

If your child arrives after the registers are closed at 9.25am, then they will be marked as 'U' for unauthorised lateness. This code covers the entire morning session and will affect your child's attendance record.



## **Illness**

We understand and appreciate that children can become ill and may need to have a few days off school. We are also aware, however, that at times children miss school when they could be in. Sometimes it is worth children coming into school and giving it a go. The guidance below may help you decide if your child is well enough to come to school.

If your child is having a regular, recurring medical issue, please let us know. We could get the school nurse involved and hopefully address your child's medical needs and improve their attendance.

If your child is absent for 5 days or more with an illness, we would expect them to have seen a doctor and will ask for evidence of an appointment or medicine prescribed. We will also require a doctor's note or an appointment card for all absences of pupils whose attendance is below 90%. If these are not provided, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **RED - STAY AT HOME**

Sickness and Diarrhoea - 48 hours must have elapsed before a child can return to school from the last episode.

### **AMBER - SEEK ADVICE**

Headache, Feeling Sick, Tummy Ache - Children often feel unwell if they are anxious, so if in doubt contact the school for advice.

### **GREEN - COME TO SCHOOL**

Mild Cough, Cold, Sore Throat, Feeling Tired - We will always contact you if your child is ill during the school day.

## Reporting an Absence

Use the free StudyBugs App



Attendance Absence Line: 01245 467973 option 1

If your child is too ill to attend school, please contact the school office before 9.25am with full details of your child's illness/symptoms.

Simply stating that your child is "unwell" or "poorly" is not sufficient reason for an authorised absence and will be followed up for additional information. Should we fail to receive a specific reason for absence, then it will be recorded as unauthorised.

In order for us to safeguard our pupils, it is important that the school receives a message on **each day** of absence.

If we do not receive notification of a pupil's absence, then contact will be made with the priority contact on our files. Any absences that are not reported by parents will be marked as unauthorised.

If we do not have regular contact from parents of an absent child, this will become a safeguarding issue. We would then carry out a home visit for a welfare check.

In the case of a routine dental or medical appointment a maximum of a half day of absence will be authorised.

## Holidays in Term Time

Changes in the law mean that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless '**exceptional circumstances**' exist. Therefore, an application to remove your child from school for the purpose of a family holiday will not be authorised.

If you wish to apply to take your child out of school during term time, a Leave of Absence Request Form **MUST** be completed and returned to the school **at least 10 days before** the first day of absence.

Leave of Absence Request Forms are available from the office or can be downloaded from the school website. Parents/Carers will be notified in writing whether the absence will appear as authorised or unauthorised on the attendance register. Should you decide to continue with the planned absence, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and a Penalty Notice will be issued upon the return to school by the Local Authority.

## Extended Absences

Any absences just before or straight after any school holiday will be seen as an extension of the holidays unless medical evidence is provided to authorise these days.

### What will the school do to support good attendance?

- We aim to make school an exciting place to learn so that children want to come every day.
- We encourage parents and carers to come in and talk to us if there are any hurdles to getting their child to school every day.
- We will do our best to support families in any way that we can.
- We will reward good attendance in school.
- We will regularly monitor children's attendance and contact families when attendance falls below 90%.

### What can parents do to support good attendance?

- Parents should bring their children to school every day that they are well enough to attend.
- If there is a reason that your child does not want to come to school, talk to us about it. Keeping a child at home does not give us the opportunity to solve the problem.
- Bring children to school on time every day.
- Speak to your child about the importance of attendance and punctuality.



## Working Together

Our aim at Barnes Farm is always to work with families to help improve a child's attendance. We know that there are many reasons why children do not attend school, so we want to support families on an individual basis. However, when we are not successful in supporting families, or they refuse to engage, the law protects pupil's rights to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise improvement efforts.

As such, parents could be:

- Issued a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority for the child's non-attendance. This can include irregular attendance and being persistently late. The penalty is £60 per child, per parent and this rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. From August 2024 this is rising to £80 per child per parent or £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- Prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1984.

Please note: If you have previously received a Penalty Notice for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance or been the subject of a prosecution for any child in relation to irregular school attendance, you may not be given the opportunity to pay a further Penalty Notice; your case may proceed directly to court.



*So why does attendance matter to my child?*

### **Attendance Descriptors and the link to Lost Learning**

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5

Cause for concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
	91%	173 days	17	85
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>171 days</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>89%</b>	<b>169 days</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>105</b>
	<b>88%</b>	<b>167 days</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>115</b>
	<b>87%</b>	<b>165 days</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Serious Cause for Concern</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>163 days</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Critical</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>161.5 days</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>142.5</b>
	<b>84%</b>	<b>159.5 days</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>152.5</b>
	<b>83%</b>	<b>158 days</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>160</b>
	<b>82%</b>	<b>156 days</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>170</b>
	<b>81%</b>	<b>154 days</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>180</b>
	<b>80%</b>	<b>152 days</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>190</b>

*Thank you to Wentworth Primary School in Maldon for inspiring much of the content of this newsletter*