



Attendance Policy

For Barnhill School

1. Rationale

All young people between the ages of 11-16 are required to be in full-time education. From September 2013 all young people between 16 and 17 were required to be either in full-time education or in training or in employment with training attached to it. This has risen to 18 in 2015.

Regular attendance at school is a key factor in determining a student's educational outcomes. Students whose attendance is 96% or above are extremely likely to realise their potential: nationally 73% of them will achieve the national benchmark of 5 A*-C passes including English and Maths whereas the figure for those with attendance below 90% is 35%. It is estimated that a week's absence every year for five years results in a student achieving the equivalent of half a grade less.

2. Policy Aim

The aim of the Middlesex Learning Partnership attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

The Middlesex Learning Partnership takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

3. The Legal Framework

Statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures:

- The Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education Act 2005
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education/Student Registration (England) Regulations 2000 and amendments
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments
- The Education and Skills Act 2008

This policy has been amended to comply with the Department for Education Advice (DfE) on School Attendance (August 2013).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the policy effectively
- Nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance half termly and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year
- Take time at termly governors' meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future

School Leadership Team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review
- Ensure that all staff are up-to-date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- Ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up-to-date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- Report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings

Teachers and Support Staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families

- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up-to-date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance

Parents and Carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- Engage with their children's education – supporting their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 6**), and include an expected date for return
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- Do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher (**see section 6.5**)
- Sign a home-school agreement (**See Appendix 1**)

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable
- Speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (**see section 6.8**). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation
- Sign a home-school agreement

5. Promoting Regular Attendance

Creating a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance at every Parents' Evening
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificate and outings/events

Support

The school offers a variety of different support to students and their families where attendance is an issue. This may include support from the Attendance Officer, the Home School Liaison Officer, a form teacher, a mentor, the school's counsellor, the pastoral team, and senior staff. In some circumstances the Local Authority Participation Officer will be attached to the case to work with the family and the school to improve attendance. The school also works with a variety of external agencies to support students who are absent from school and their families.

Support (Parents/Carers)

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 makes things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times, including restricting time on computers/iPods, etc.
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

6. Categories of Absence and Procedure for Reporting Absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child.

6.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on each day of absence. When the child returns to school they should bring a note from their parents explaining the absence – this is for the school records.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

6.2 Medical or dental appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

6.3 Authorised Absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

6.4 Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence.

6.5 Family holidays and extended leave

From March 2016 the school will not be authorising any holidays during term time and this applies to all year groups, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, a parent/carer choosing to take their child on holiday in term time without authorisation may risk a penalty notice and £120 fine each on return from holiday. Holiday/flight details will be requested for all unauthorised holidays.

6.6 Religious observance

The Middlesex Learning Partnership recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absences for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

6.7 Late arrival

Registration begins at 8.20am. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **The registration period ends at 8.35am.**

Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

A register is also taken at the start of all subject lessons by the subject teacher, and any unexplained absences reported back to the school office. If a student is late to the lesson this will be recorded on the register.

Persistent lateness will result in disciplinary action.

6.8 Absence procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the Attendance Officer by telephone on the absence line (020 8839 0616)
- Send a note on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – **you must do this even if you have already telephoned us**
- If the absence is due to illness and is longer than two days, you will be asked to provide medical evidence (note from medical practitioner or photocopy of prescription)
- Or you can call into school and report to reception, to leave a message for the Attendance Officer
- Parents should inform the school of any changes at home which may impact on attendance

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Invite you to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Support Officer

- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Participation Officer if attendance moves below 90% or if your child is absent for more than 10 days without authorisation

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have a correct number. If we don't then something important may be missed, and we won't be able to contact you in an emergency. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

- A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and cooperation 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 students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.
- All PA cases are automatically made known to the Local Authority Participation Officer.

Parents are responsible for making sure their child attends school to meet the Government target of 95%.

7. School Action: Following Up Absences

Class registers are sent to the school's Attendance Officer at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Parents will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

Form tutors will chase pupils for written explanation from their parents/carers for their absence upon the child's return from being away. This is for the school records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.

Where a child has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised and both the school and LA have been unable to contact the parents, the school may remove the child from the school roll. The school will notify the local authority when such action is taken.

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils who are discovered to be truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help. The school may take further action against the parents, including referral to the local authority to begin criminal proceedings against the parents.

8. Understanding Types of Absences

Present	Student is on school premises at the time of registration
Authorised Absence	Student has the authority of the school to be sent either given in advance (e.g. hospital appointment) or afterwards (e.g. on notification of illness)
Approved Educational Activity	Student is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site
Unauthorised Absence	No explanation received or unacceptable reason given

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, preferably in writing.

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 Local Authority Participation Officer using 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 a mark
- Shopping or looking after other children
- Birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

9. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards aim to recognise good/improved attendance and punctuality. Rewards come in these different forms:

- Termly and yearly individual certificates for 100% attendance
- Termly certificates for improved attendance
- Praise during Year Assemblies – prizes, pizza party, trophies

The following **sanctions** aim to discourage absence from school which undoubtedly has a detrimental effect on a student's progress and attainment:

- Implementation of a first day of absence telephone call response system
- Detention – after the normal school day for lateness (on any three occasions)
- Attendance at INSET days or, on occasions, Saturdays

10. The Local Authority Participation Officer

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. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Participation Officer.

He/she 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 **Penalty Notices (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid within 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice)** or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 441(1) and 444(1A).

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence".

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Participation Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858 or participationteam@hillington.gov.uk.

11. School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

The school 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 and you should take time to study them.

The **minimum level** of attendance for this school is **95% attendance** and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our students can be amongst the best in Hillingdon.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information is provided for parents at Parents' Evenings.

12. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its attendance figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be made available to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance will help your child reach their potential.

HOME SCHOOL AGREEMENT

Barnhill Community High is committed to providing a positive learning environment in which young people can achieve and enjoy a purposeful and well-ordered programme of studies and experiences. The Governors and staff want to establish positive links with parents/guardians and actively seek your co-operation in supporting and encouraging your children whilst at this school.

The following points will help to develop and strengthen the important partnership between home and school. Please find below clear statements as to what we, as a school, expect and equally what you, as a parents/guardian, may expect of us.

Ethos

The school seeks to provide a positive working atmosphere in which each individual is valued, where personal endeavour is encouraged and fostered and where responsible and considerate use of the school and its environment is encouraged.

Students are expected to respect these values and the individuals who work and live in and around the school.

Standards of Education

Barnhill Community High will provide well-qualified and expert staff that will carefully plan all lessons and activities. Students will be fully prepared for examinations and all students will have access to the full range of studies.

We expect our students to work hard and to the best of their ability in all the activities they undertake. Students should be prepared to participate in as wide a range of activities as they can.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of a good education and tasks will be regularly set to extend and support students' learning. We ask parents/guardians to ensure homework is completed regularly in a quiet area at home. You will receive information about the amount of homework that can be expected, how to support your child and what to do if there are difficulties.

Regular and Punctual Attendance

Barnhill Community High School expects students to attend regularly and punctually. We will make regular contact with parents and alert you immediately when there are problems or unexplained absence. Parents are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure your child arrives at school and to inform the school when your child will be absent and provide a letter upon their return.

Discipline and Behaviour

The school has an agreed discipline policy including an anti-bullying policy, which we expect parents to support. The traditional values of courtesy, dress and commitment are highly valued. The wearing of the prescribed uniform by students and the maintenance of a smart, well ordered learning environment will help enhance the reputation for the students and the school.

Information Exchange

Good two-way communication between the home and school will mean that together we can help ensure your child's success at this school. Many concerns can be quickly resolved before they become problems by a simple telephone call, visit or note in the student planner.

We will inform you of your child's progress and encourage you to tell us about any concerns you have, either in relation to the school or changes in home life.

Yeading Lane, Hayes, Middlesex, UB4 9LE
Tel: 020 8839 0600 Fax: 020 8839 0661

Student's Name: _____

Barnhill Community High seeks to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its students and to promote the maximum possible development of individual students' talents and potential within a tolerant and caring community.

The school's aims for its students are:

- An education based on the highest expectations
- The highest standard of teaching, personal support and guidance
- A broad, balanced and relevant education
- Regular homework and marking of work
- Regular feedback and reporting on progress including a report, and parents' evening once a year
- A wide range of learning experiences
- Opportunities for a wide range of extra activities
- A safe, secure, well disciplined and stimulating working environment

We also see as central to the school ethos the 3-way partnership between the school, parents and students. We see this partnership as a contract between parents, students and the school. We feel that it is instrumental in ensuring that students commit themselves wholeheartedly to the hard work that will ensure they are successful at Barnhill Community High.

Signed: _____ Headteacher

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors

PARENTS

At Barnhill Community High we involve parents fully in the education of their child. We recognise the great benefit to a student's progress that comes from the active support and involvement of parents. Parents can support their child and the school in the ways given below.

As a parent of a student at Barnhill Community High I agree to:

- Encourage my child to show respect for all staff and other students at the school
- Encourage my child to behave responsibly at school and in other situations where the child is identified as a student of the school
- Ensure attendance and punctuality and keep the school informed about any reason for absence or special circumstances that may affect their schoolwork
- Promote the continuity of my child's education by endeavouring to take family holidays during school holiday times
- Ensure, to the best of my ability, that my child has all the equipment and books necessary for the school activities of the day (including PE kit)
- Be aware of uniform regulations and ensure that my child is correctly dressed
- Make every effort to look at and discuss my child's schoolwork on a regular basis
- Be aware of and make adequate arrangements for homework which include checking and signing my child's diary each week
- Make every effort to attend parents' evenings and school functions as well as attending special appointments if requested
- Help promote respect and care for school property and that of others and be prepared to pay for or replace items in circumstances where my child has wilfully damaged or lost property

I have read and support the principles of working together.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

STUDENTS

Student's Name: _____ Tutor Group: _____

I agree as a student at Barnhill Community High to:

- Treat all members of the school community with tolerance, understanding and respect as I would expect to be treated myself
- Attend school as required and to be punctual at all times
- Have with me all my equipment, books and kit necessary for the school activities of the day
- Wear the correct school uniform
- Work to the best of my ability in all areas and at all times
- Complete homework and project work on time
- Carry my planner at all times and use it properly
- Help look after and improve the school environment, including school property
- Deliver letters and other communications between the school and my parents
- Keep the school rules and behave in a responsible way, both in school and when travelling to and from school

Signed: _____ Date: _____