

Barham Church of England Primary School



Attendance Policy

Reviewed	January 2025
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Date of next review	January 2027

At Barham Church of England Primary School, we believe that every child should have the opportunity to flourish and achieve their full potential. Regular attendance is fundamental to academic success, wellbeing, personal development and building positive relationships. Guided by our Christian vision and values of being Kind, Confident and Curious, we are committed to creating a nurturing, inclusive and supportive environment where children feel safe, valued and eager to learn each day.

We recognise that good attendance is everyone's responsibility and that strong partnerships between school, families and the wider community are essential. We expect all pupils to attend school every day that it is open, unless there is a valid reason for absence. Where attendance concerns arise, we will work with families in a compassionate and supportive way to understand and address any barriers. By building strong relationships, offering timely support and maintaining high expectations, we aim to ensure that every child can access the full-time education to which they are entitled, develop confidence and curiosity in their learning, and thrive as valued members of our school community.

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to Improve School Attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Maintained schools: Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents>[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:

- Making sure the school shares required attendance information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the deputy headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Michelle Anderson and can be contacted via the school office.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/deputy headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Claire Taylor and can be contacted via the school office.

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by 8:50am and 1:15pm.

3.6 School Admin staff

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Senior Leadership Team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school on 01227 831312 to report their child's absence before 8:35 on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. If the child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers, where possible.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs Anderson who can be contacted via the school office.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:35 and ends at 3:15 p.m.

Pupils must arrive at school by 8:35 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:35am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm, in accordance with the Department for Education's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:35, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 01227 831312 or office@barham.kent.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Where possible, the pupil should:

- Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment
- Wear school uniform to their appointment, to make it easier to return to school afterwards

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

Parents requesting a leave of absence during term time must complete the school's Leave of Absence Request Form, available from the school office and the school website. Requests should normally be made at least two weeks in advance wherever possible. The Headteacher will consider each request individually and may require supporting evidence before making a decision.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- If a child is regularly late, the parents will be contacted and given notice to improve

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parents on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with we will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see Section 7 below), as appropriate.

■ 4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports emailed home via Insight. Parents can also see their child's attendance at any time via the Arbor Parent App or Parent Portal. Parents can discuss attendance concerns at any point by contacting the Attendance Officer or Headteacher.

5. Authorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, and unforeseen events that are outside a family's control and make a leave of absence from school unavoidable. Each request will be considered individually by the Headteacher, taking account of the specific circumstances, the child's attendance record, the impact on their

education, and any supporting evidence provided. The Department for Education does not consider family holidays, leisure activities or recreation to be exceptional circumstances.

Examples of circumstances that may be authorised include:

- The death of a close family member, including attendance at a funeral and reasonable associated travel.
- Visiting or supporting a close family member who is seriously ill.
- Significant family trauma, crisis or emergency.
- Serious illness, medical treatment or recovery needs of the child or parent, supported by appropriate professional advice where relevant.
- Rehabilitation following trauma or significant medical treatment.
- Attendance at a major religious observance or ceremony where absence is unavoidable.
- Exceptional circumstances relating to service families, including deployment or return from operational duty.
- Other rare and unforeseen events that the Headteacher considers exceptional.

Examples of circumstances that will not normally be authorised include:

- Family holidays or leisure travel, including trips described as educational.
- Travel arranged because flights, accommodation or holidays are cheaper during term time.
- Visiting relatives abroad where there is no serious illness, bereavement or other exceptional reason.
- Taking time off to provide an alternative experience for a child.
- Attendance at destination weddings or family celebrations.
- Birthdays or other social occasions.
- Extending a holiday due to travel arrangements or convenience.

The decision to authorise leave rests solely with the Headteacher and there is no automatic entitlement to absence during term time.

Why Requests May Be Declined

The Department for Education expects schools to authorise leave during term time only in **exceptional circumstances**. Exceptional circumstances are generally understood to be rare, significant, unavoidable events that are outside normal day-to-day family life. Holidays, leisure activities, travel arrangements, cost considerations or personal preference do not usually meet this threshold.

When considering a request, the school will assess whether the circumstances are genuinely exceptional and whether the absence could reasonably take place during school holidays or outside term time. Each application will be considered on its individual merits and supporting evidence may be requested.

The school recognises that many experiences, family events and opportunities may be valuable and meaningful for children and families. However, the decision to authorise absence is based on whether the event is **unavoidable and exceptional**, rather than whether it is enjoyable, beneficial or educational. Requests based primarily on convenience, preference, cost, travel arrangements or leisure will normally be recorded as unauthorised absence

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance. Pupils should attend school on the days surrounding those set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes - a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age, have no fixed abode, and are travelling with a parent whose trade or business requires them to travel from place to place.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

Pupils attending approved educational activities, educational visits, sporting activities, dual registration provision or other activities approved by the school will not be counted as absent from school.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance. Attendance Ted is awarded weekly to the class with the highest attendance and is celebrated during Celebration Assembly.

7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

7.1 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

7.2 Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

7.3 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or a deputy headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority. The headteacher or Attendance officer will meet with pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence and their parents to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support.

8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

The school recognises that pupils may experience periods of absence due to physical health needs, mental health difficulties, emotional wellbeing concerns, or medical treatment. We are committed to working in partnership with families and other professionals to minimise disruption to education and support a successful return to school wherever possible.

When a pupil's attendance is affected by mental or physical ill health, the school will:

- Maintain regular and supportive communication with parents/carers.
- Seek to understand and remove barriers to attendance.
- Consider appropriate adjustments to support attendance and participation in school life.
- Work collaboratively with external agencies, including health professionals, the school nursing service, CAMHS, Early Help services and the local authority where appropriate.
- Develop individual attendance plans, support plans or reintegration plans where necessary.
- Monitor attendance and wellbeing closely to ensure support remains appropriate and effective.

Support and adjustments may include:

- A phased return to school following illness or absence.
- Adjustments to the school day or timetable.
- Access to a trusted adult, pastoral support or wellbeing check-ins.
- Temporary adaptations to expectations, routines or learning activities.
- Support during unstructured times such as breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, medical conditions or disabilities.
- Provision of learning materials during periods of absence where appropriate and practicable.

The school will always take a compassionate and individualised approach. However, parents/carers remain responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable education, and the school may seek medical evidence where absences due to illness become frequent, prolonged or impact significantly on attendance.

Where a pupil is absent for an extended period due to physical or mental ill health, the school will work with the family, health professionals and the local authority to ensure appropriate educational provision and support is in place, in line with statutory guidance.

Parents should consult the NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school?](#) when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness. We will share this guidance with parents, and provide support in understanding it, in order to promote school attendance wherever appropriate.

8.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

The school recognises that some pupils face additional barriers to attendance and may require targeted support to attend school regularly and achieve their full potential. We are committed to identifying barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity and working closely with pupils, families and external agencies to reduce those barriers and improve attendance.

Where a pupil's attendance is affected by special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantage, social care involvement, caring responsibilities or other vulnerabilities, the school will take an individualised and graduated approach. This may include:

- Working closely with parents/carers to understand the factors affecting attendance.
- Identifying and addressing barriers to attendance through early intervention and support.
- Providing appropriate pastoral, academic and wellbeing support.
- Making reasonable adjustments to routines, provision or expectations where appropriate.
- Developing individual attendance plans, support plans or reintegration plans.
- Using a multi-agency approach where additional support is required.
- Monitoring attendance, wellbeing and engagement regularly to ensure support remains effective.

For pupils with SEND, the school will consider any difficulties arising from their needs and make reasonable adjustments to support attendance. This may include adaptations to the school day, support with transitions, sensory or emotional regulation strategies, access to a trusted adult, or changes to routines where appropriate. Examples may include:

- Phased returns to school
- Modified start or finish times
- Meet-and-greet support on arrival
- Regular trusted adult check-ins
- Access to a safe or quiet space
- Visual timetables and personalised routines
- Sensory accommodations and regulation strategies

- Supported transitions between activities
- Additional support during lunchtimes and breaktimes

Adjustments will be tailored to the individual needs of the pupil and reviewed regularly.

For disadvantaged pupils, the school will work proactively with families to identify and reduce practical barriers to attendance. Support may include signposting to external services, accessing early help, provision of pastoral support, and working collaboratively with families to improve attendance.

For pupils who are known, or have previously been known, to Children's Social Care, the school will work closely with social workers, family support workers and other professionals to promote consistent attendance and ensure that any safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly.

The school also recognises the needs of young carers and pupils experiencing other significant challenges, including bereavement, family breakdown, domestic abuse, housing difficulties, anxiety, bullying, or other circumstances that may impact attendance. Appropriate support and adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

All interventions and reasonable adjustments will be timely, appropriate, well-chosen and targeted to meet the individual needs of the pupil. The impact of support will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is helping to improve attendance and engagement.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan and their attendance begins to decline, the school will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand and address any barriers to attendance. In line with statutory guidance, the school will inform the local authority where attendance concerns arise for a pupil with an EHC Plan.

8.4 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The school is committed to supporting pupils who return to school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence. We recognise that returning to school after an extended absence due to illness, medical treatment, mental health needs, family circumstances, safeguarding concerns or other significant events can be challenging and may require additional support.

The school will work closely with the pupil, parents/carers and any relevant professionals to ensure that the return to school is planned, supportive and successful. The aim will be to help the pupil re-engage with learning, rebuild confidence and re-establish positive attendance patterns.

Support may include:

- A planned reintegration meeting with the pupil and parents/carers before their return.
- A personalised reintegration or attendance support plan.
- A phased return to school where appropriate and supported by professional advice.
- Access to a trusted adult for regular check-ins and emotional support.
- Additional pastoral, wellbeing or nurture support.
- Support to rebuild friendships, confidence and a sense of belonging within the school community.
- Adaptations to routines, timetables or learning expectations during the transition period.
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, medical conditions or disabilities.
- Provision of learning materials or opportunities to catch up on missed learning.
- Additional support during transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes where these present a barrier.
- Regular review meetings to monitor progress and adjust support as required.

Where external professionals are involved, including health services, CAMHS, social care or specialist SEND services, the school will work collaboratively to ensure that recommendations are implemented and reviewed appropriately.

The school recognises that every pupil's circumstances are different. As a result, reintegration support will be tailored to individual needs and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains appropriate, effective and proportionate. The focus will be on helping the pupil feel safe, supported and successful in returning to full participation in school life.

8.5. Prolonged absence for children in the EYFS

Although attendance is not compulsory until the term after a child's fifth birthday, regular attendance is strongly encouraged in the Early Years Foundation Stage as it supports children's learning, development, wellbeing and preparation for future school attendance.

Where a child in the EYFS has a prolonged absence, repeated absences, or is absent without notification, the school will work proactively with parents/carers to understand the reasons for the absence and offer support where appropriate.

In cases of prolonged absence or where no reason for absence has been provided, the school will:

- Attempt to contact parents/carers on the first day of absence.
- Contact all available emergency contacts if parents/carers cannot be reached.
- Seek to establish whether there are any welfare, safeguarding, health, family or practical concerns affecting attendance.
- Maintain regular communication with families to offer support and encourage a return to regular attendance.
- Consider whether additional support, advice or referrals may be beneficial.
- Keep accurate records of all communication and actions taken.

When deciding whether an absence should be viewed as prolonged or a cause for concern, the school will consider:

- The child's age and stage of development.
- The length, frequency and pattern of absence.
- Any previous attendance concerns.
- The child's individual needs and vulnerabilities.
- The circumstances of the child and family.
- Any known safeguarding, welfare, health or social care concerns.

Where appropriate, the school may offer support through:

- Meetings with parents/carers.
- Early Help intervention.
- Signposting to community, health or family support services.
- Support from the school's pastoral, SEND or safeguarding teams.
- Multi-agency working with external professionals.

The welfare and safety of the child will always be the school's priority. Where there are concerns about a child's wellbeing or whereabouts, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures as set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This may include making referrals to Children's Social Care, consulting other agencies, undertaking a home visit where appropriate, or requesting a police welfare check if there are concerns that a child may be at risk.

Where a child has been absent for an extended period, the school will work with the family to support a positive and successful return to nursery or Reception, including a gradual reintroduction where appropriate.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the SENCO and DSL)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

9.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of possible sessions. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of possible sessions. Reducing persistent and severe absence is a priority for the school because regular attendance is essential for pupils' academic achievement, wellbeing, safeguarding and social development.

The school will take a proactive, supportive and graduated approach to improving attendance and reducing persistent and severe absence. We recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider barriers and will seek to understand and address the underlying causes wherever possible.

To reduce persistent and severe absence, the school will:

- Monitor attendance data regularly to identify patterns, trends and emerging concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Analyse attendance data for individual pupils and groups, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils known to Children's Social Care and other vulnerable groups.
- Act swiftly where attendance falls below expected levels.
- Make first-day contact with parents/carers where a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided.
- Consider potential safeguarding concerns and respond in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- Meet regularly with parents/carers of pupils whose attendance is causing concern.
- Work collaboratively with pupils and families to identify and remove barriers to attendance.
- Develop individual attendance plans and support plans where appropriate.
- Implement appropriate interventions, adjustments and support strategies.
- Work with external agencies including the Attendance and Inclusion Service, Early Help, Children's Social Care, School Health, CAMHS and other professionals where required.
- Provide pastoral, emotional and wellbeing support where attendance difficulties are linked to anxiety, mental health, bereavement or other personal circumstances.
- Consider reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND or medical needs.
- Celebrate and promote good attendance through a positive school culture.
- Monitor the impact of interventions and review support regularly.
- Use formal attendance procedures and legal interventions where support has not been successful and unauthorised absence continues.

Attendance Intervention Thresholds

The school uses a graduated and supportive approach to improving attendance. Attendance percentages are used as a guide to trigger review, support and intervention; however, concerns may be addressed at any stage where there are safeguarding concerns, patterns of absence, persistent lateness, unauthorised absence, or other barriers affecting attendance.

Stage 1 – Early Identification (Attendance between 90% and 95%)

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, attendance will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and Senior Leadership Team. Parents may be contacted informally to discuss any concerns and identify whether there are any barriers affecting attendance.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance trends closely.
- Discuss attendance during parent consultations where appropriate.
- Offer early support where barriers are identified.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Encourage parents to seek support at an early stage.

The aim at this stage is to prevent attendance concerns from becoming more significant and to work collaboratively with families to improve attendance

Stage 2 – Attendance Concern (Continued concerns or no improvement following Stage 1)

Where attendance does not improve, or where patterns of absence begin to emerge, parents/carers will receive an Attendance Concern Letter.

The school may:

- Arrange an informal attendance discussion with parents/carers.
- Monitor attendance over an agreed review period.
- Explore any barriers affecting attendance.
- Offer support and signposting to relevant services where appropriate.
- Review attendance regularly and provide updates to parents.

At this stage the focus remains on early intervention and preventing attendance from falling into the persistent absence category.

Stage 3 – Persistent Absence (Attendance below 90%)

A pupil is considered to be persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions.

Where attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers will be invited to attend a formal Attendance Support Meeting.

At this stage the school will:

- Review attendance data and discuss concerns with parents/carers.
- Seek to understand and address barriers to attendance.
- Develop an Attendance Support Plan where appropriate.
- Agree attendance targets and review dates.
- Consider referrals to Early Help, School Health, CAMHS, the Attendance and Inclusion Service or other relevant agencies.
- Implement reasonable adjustments and support strategies where appropriate.

Attendance will be monitored closely and reviewed regularly

Stage 4 – Severe Concern or Continued Unauthorised Absence (Attendance below 85% or insufficient improvement)

Where attendance falls below 85%, or where attendance remains a concern despite support and intervention, the school will consider additional formal action.

This may include:

- Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Multi-agency meetings and additional support.
- Issuing a Notice to Improve where appropriate.
- Continued safeguarding oversight and monitoring.
- Consideration of legal interventions in line with Kent County Council procedures.
- Requesting Fixed Penalty Notices where statutory thresholds for unauthorised absence have been met.

The school will continue to work with families and external agencies to address barriers to attendance wherever possible

Severe Absence (Attendance below 50%)

Pupils whose attendance falls below 50% are classified as severely absent and are at significant risk of educational disadvantage and safeguarding concerns.

The school will:

- Ensure immediate oversight by senior leaders.
- Review safeguarding concerns and welfare needs.
- Work closely with parents/carers and external agencies.
- Consider Early Help and multi-agency intervention.
- Develop a robust attendance support and reintegration plan.
- Hold regular review meetings to monitor progress and impact.

Where appropriate, the school will work alongside Kent County Council and other partners to secure the pupil's entitlement to education and support improved attendance

Please note: These thresholds are intended as guidance and do not prevent the school from intervening earlier where individual circumstances warrant this. All decisions will take account of a pupil's age, needs, vulnerabilities, SEND, safeguarding circumstances and any barriers affecting attendance.

Associated Documentation

The school uses a range of standardised attendance letters and templates to support the graduated response outlined in this policy. Examples are included in Appendices 2–6. These may be adapted to reflect individual circumstances and attendance concerns. The school will always seek to work in partnership with families and provide appropriate support before considering formal enforcement action.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Senior Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- EYFS Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable

C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		

G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2 – Stage 2 Attendance Concern Letter

Barham Church of England Primary School

[Date]

Private and Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance Concern – [Child's Name]

At Barham Church of England Primary School, we are committed to helping every child flourish through regular attendance and positive engagement in school life.

We are writing because we have identified some concerns regarding **[Child's Name]'s attendance**, which is currently **[XX]%**.

We recognise that there can be many reasons why attendance becomes a concern and we want to work in partnership with you to understand whether there are any barriers affecting your child's attendance. Our aim is to provide support at an early stage so that concerns do not become more significant.

Regular attendance is essential for children's learning, wellbeing, friendships and confidence. Even occasional absences can make it more difficult for children to keep up with learning and fully participate in school life.

Over the coming weeks we will monitor attendance closely and would appreciate your support in ensuring that **[Child's Name]** attends school every day and arrives on time wherever possible.

If there are circumstances affecting attendance that you would like to discuss, please contact us. Support may be available and we would welcome the opportunity to work together to find solutions.

Attendance will be reviewed on **[Review Date]**. If concerns continue, we may invite you to meet with us to discuss further support and next steps.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Mrs Michelle Anderson

Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Officer

Appendix 3 – Stage 3 Attendance Support Meeting Letter

Barham Church of England Primary School

[Date]

Private and Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

Invitation to Attendance Support Meeting – [Child's Name]

I am writing regarding **[Child's Name]'s attendance**, which is currently **[XX]%**.

As outlined in our Attendance Policy, attendance below 90% is classified as persistent absence. We are concerned that the amount of school being missed may be affecting your child's learning, wellbeing, friendships and overall progress.

We recognise that attendance difficulties can arise for a variety of reasons and we want to work in partnership with you to understand any barriers that may be affecting attendance and identify any support that may help.

We would therefore like to invite you to attend an Attendance Support Meeting:

Date: [Date]

Time: [Time]

Location: Barham Church of England Primary School

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Review attendance and punctuality.
- Discuss any barriers affecting attendance.
- Consider support that may be available.
- Agree actions and attendance targets.
- Develop an Attendance Support Plan where appropriate.
- Discuss how school and home can work together to improve attendance.

At Barham Church of England Primary School, we are committed to supporting every child to flourish through our values of being Kind, Confident and Curious. Our aim is to work collaboratively with families to ensure that all pupils can access the full benefits of school life and achieve their potential.

Please contact the school office if you are unable to attend so that alternative arrangements can be made.

We look forward to meeting with you and working together to support **[Child's Name]**.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jo Duhig

Headteacher

Appendix 4 – Stage 4 Notice to Improve

Barham Church of England Primary School

[Date]

Private and Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

Notice to Improve Attendance – [Child's Name]

We are writing regarding ongoing concerns about **[Child's Name]'s attendance**, which is currently **[XX]%**.

Despite previous communication, monitoring and support offered by the school, attendance remains below the level expected to ensure that your child can fully access their education. As a result, we are now issuing this **Notice to Improve** in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy and local authority procedures.

At Barham Church of England Primary School, we are committed to working in partnership with families and will always seek to understand and address barriers to attendance. Support offered to date has included:

- Attendance monitoring and review
- Attendance support meetings
- Advice and guidance
- Attendance Support Plan (where applicable)
- Signposting or referral to appropriate services

Unfortunately, attendance has not improved sufficiently and further action is now required.

Current Attendance Information

Pupil: [Child's Name]

Current Attendance: [XX]%

Attendance Target: [97%+]

Review Period: [Start Date] to [End Date]

Improvement Required

During the review period, we expect:

- Regular attendance at school every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence.
- Improved punctuality.
- Engagement with any support offered by the school.
- Communication with the school regarding any difficulties affecting attendance.

Support Available

The school remains committed to supporting your family and can offer:

- Attendance review meetings
- Pastoral and wellbeing support
- Early Help referral where appropriate
- Attendance Support Plan reviews

- Referrals to other services where appropriate

If there are circumstances affecting attendance that the school is not aware of, please contact us as soon as possible.

Important Information

If sufficient improvement is not made during the review period, the school may refer the matter to **Kent County Council's Attendance Service**. The Local Authority may then consider further action in line with statutory guidance, which could include:

- A Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- Other attendance enforcement measures available to the Local Authority

Our preference is to avoid formal enforcement action and instead work with you to secure improved attendance and positive outcomes for **[Child's Name]**.

If you would like to discuss this letter or any support that may be available, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jo Duhig

Headteacher

Barham Church of England Primary School

Appendix 5 – Referral to Local Authority / Penalty Notice Warning Letter

Barham Church of England Primary School

[Date]

Private and Confidential

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance Concern – Referral to Kent County Council Attendance Service

We are writing regarding the ongoing concerns about **[Child's Name]'s attendance**.

Despite previous attendance monitoring, meetings, support and intervention, attendance remains a significant concern. We have previously:

- Raised attendance concerns with you.
- Offered support and guidance.
- Held attendance review meetings.
- Implemented and reviewed an Attendance Support Plan.
- Issued a Notice to Improve.

Unfortunately, attendance has not improved sufficiently and unauthorised absences continue to be recorded.

As a result, the school is now referring the case to Kent County Council's Attendance Service for further consideration and support.

Current Attendance Information

Pupil: [Child's Name]

Current Attendance: [XX]%

Unauthorised Sessions Recorded: [XX]

Review Period: [Date] to [Date]

What Happens Next?

Following referral, Kent County Council will review the attendance information and determine what further action may be appropriate.

Where statutory thresholds have been met, this may include consideration of:

- A Penalty Notice.
- An Education Supervision Order.
- Prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Other attendance enforcement measures available to the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices

Under current regulations, where a Penalty Notice is issued:

- A first Penalty Notice is charged at **£80 if paid within 21 days**, increasing to **£160 if paid within 28 days**.
- A second Penalty Notice within a three-year period is charged at **£160**.

- A third Penalty Notice cannot normally be issued within the same three-year period and alternative legal action may be considered.

Continued Support

The school remains committed to supporting your child and family and encourages you to engage with any support offered by the school or Local Authority.

At Barham Church of England Primary School, our priority remains ensuring that every pupil can access their education, develop confidence, build positive relationships and flourish through our values of being Kind, Confident and Curious.

If there are any circumstances affecting attendance that the school or Attendance Service should be aware of, please contact us without delay.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jo Duhig

Headteacher

Barham Church of England Primary School

Appendix 6 – Attendance Support Plan

Barham Church of England Primary School Attendance Support Plan

Pupil Name	
Class	
Current Attendance	
Attendance Target	
Date of Meeting	
Review Date	

Reason for Concern

Attendance is currently below the expected level and support is required to improve attendance and remove barriers.

Identified Barriers

- ☐ Illness/Medical Needs
- ☐ Mental Health/Anxiety
- ☐ SEND Needs
- ☐ Family Circumstances
- ☐ Friendship Issues
- ☐ Lateness/Routines
- ☐ Transport Difficulties
- ☐ Other: _____

Support Agreed

School Actions	Parent/Carer Actions	Pupil Actions

Attendance Target

Current Attendance: _____ %

Target Attendance: _____ %

Review Period: _____

Success Measures

The plan will be considered successful if:

- ☐ Attendance improves towards target
- ☐ Punctuality improves
- ☐ Barriers are reduced
- ☐ Parent/carers engagement improves
- ☐ Pupil reports feeling more confident attending school

Review Outcome

- ☐ Target Achieved
- ☐ Good Improvement
- ☐ Some Improvement
- ☐ Limited Improvement

☐ Further Intervention Required

Next Steps:

1

2

3

Signatures

Parent/Carer: _____ **Date:** _____

Pupil (if appropriate): _____ **Date:** _____

Attendance Lead: _____ **Date:** _____