

St Ambrose Barlow RC High School

Information for Parents



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY PROCEDURES

September 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

St Ambrose Barlow takes attendance very seriously. The school's attendance target is 95% and we expect all pupils to attain this target.

It is important that we receive an explanation for EVERY absence. Any unexplained absences are regarded as unauthorised according to government guidelines. We are required to complete an annual return of children's attendance with details of authorised (i.e. explained) and unauthorised (unexplained) absences. However, it is very important to understand that only a school can approve absence, not parent or carer.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. This enables the school to work in partnership with the parent/carer by identifying what the issues are and devising a joint action plan to implement interventions that can improve the situation.

It is the parent/carer's duty to ensure that these requirements are carried out, NOT the child's. The same applies for making sure that children arrive at school on time.

Information about absence can be passed on to the school in several ways, any of which are acceptable:

- a) A telephone call to student services – 0161 921 1589 (Year 7,8,9) or 921 1551 (Year 10,11) – before 10.00 a.m. A voicemail system is available for you to leave a message.
- b) A note, written by yourself. A note in your child's diary is acceptable, but this MUST be brought to student services.
- c) If there are any special circumstances you may wish to discuss with a Form Tutor or Pupil Progress Co-ordinator (formerly Head of Year), please contact the school and they will call you back as soon as their timetable allows.

SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I take my child to the doctor or dentist in school time?

YES. However, we would ask that you TRY to make any appointments out of school hours. Absence, for whatever reason, disadvantages your child. Advance notice of dental, hospital or doctor's appointments should be given and a copy of the appointment card produced if possible. Should your child need to leave to attend an appointment, he/she must be collected from school and sign out at reception. **We cannot allow children to make their own way.** We would normally expect to see the child in school for the session *before and after* the appointment. Absence from school for such appointments will show as an absence on their records and reports.

Is a family holiday allowed in school time?

NO. The school will not allow holidays in term time and these marks will be unauthorised in the register. There are 13 weeks during the school year when holidays can be taken. Please remember that every absence from school disadvantages your child. Pupils who have 10 unauthorised absences (5 school days) will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer and a fine imposed. We have had incidents where parents telephone the school to say a child is unwell, when in fact, they have been on holiday. The school will ask the Education Welfare Officer to make a home visit to investigate incidents of absence when it is believed the child is on holiday.

Parental condoned absences will not necessarily be marked as authorised absence. The following are examples of unacceptable excuses which can easily be avoided:

- Going shopping
- Getting a haircut
- Buying a pair of shoes/clothes
- Looking after a younger brother/sister
- Going on a day trip

When is my child late for school?

Your child should be on their registration group lines by 8.40 a.m. each day. After 8.45 and at 1.45 (afternoon registration), they will be marked late. If your child arrives after 9.30 a.m. their lateness will be regarded as an unauthorised absence for the whole of that session and 10 accrued 'U' codes will incur a fine.

What will happen if my child's absence is unauthorised?

This will be highlighted in the register and we are legally required to pass on the information on to the Local Authority. If a child has 10 unauthorised absences, parents/carers may be fined. We are legally obliged to inform the Local Authority and as a consequence, further legal action may be taken.

St Ambrose Barlow will consider applying penalty notice warnings in the following circumstances:

- Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more (there are two sessions in a day)
- Persistent late arrival (after the register has closed and an unauthorised absence is incurred).

The Local Authority can instigate prosecution under the Education Act 1966 section 441 or 441(a) when:

- Parents/carers persistently fail to respond to any correspondence in relation to their child's absence
- Evidence indicates that support has been offered but parents/carers have failed to engage
- Targets have been agreed with the parents/carers through the Fast Track procedure but improvements have not been made

Does the school reward good attendance?

YES – any child who achieves full attendance for the whole term will be presented with a 100% attendance certificate during assembly (where possible). There are other rewards including our VIVO rewards system for good attendance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE IS SHOWN ON THE TABLE BELOW

	Percentage Attendance	Percentage of students who Achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSEs
	96 - 100%	90.9%
	91 - 95%	86.4%
	85 - 90%	65.1%
	Below 85%	41.6%



Finally, a word of thanks for the many parents/carers who help us to maintain the high standards we are setting. By working together in partnership, we can provide the best opportunities for the pupils in our care.

We will be very pleased to support and help parents if they have any concerns about their child.