



Parent Guide to Attendance Brookland Infant and Nursery School

As well as being a legal requirement, it is vital to children's learning, wellbeing and happiness at school that they have the best possible attendance at school. The school encourages and rewards good attendance for all pupils at individual and class level and administers its attendance policy in line with Barnet and National expectations. However, we are aware that there will be occasional exceptional circumstances that will require individual support or alternative arrangements. As a staff team we are available and wish to encourage parents to discuss any difficulties they may be experiencing.

School times

The classroom doors will be opened in the morning at 8:45am. Your child should be in class by 9.00am.

What happens if my child is late?

It is unsettling and sometimes upsetting for children if they arrive late at school and miss the start of the day. The register is taken promptly at 9.00am. If your child arrives between 9.00am - 9.20am they will be marked late. Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the office to be signed in. Where children arrive after 9:20am parents are expected to send a note to explain the reasons for lateness. Until such a note has been received and the explanation for lateness accepted by the School your child's mark will remain unauthorised. Some reasons that are not accepted as reasons for late arrival are:

- Traffic – unless it is known that there is a problem on the local roads, which means that other children and staff will arrive late.
- Oversleeping – either from a late night or parents sleeping through the alarm.
- Nowhere to park.
- Birthdays (opening presents etc).

Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone or email the school on the first day of absence. The school then needs an explanation for each further day of absence either by email, letter or phone. If we do not receive an explanation or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be noted on your child's end of year report and school record. If you experience difficulties communicating in this way please speak to the Headteacher.

What reasons does the school accept for absence?

- Genuine illness.
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments.
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement.
- Participation in approved public performance.

What is an unacceptable reason for absence?

The school will not authorise absences for:

- Day trips
- Holidays
- Birthdays
- Visiting relatives
- Relatives visiting
- Parental illness
- Looking after siblings
- Shopping.
- Practising for exams.

(This list is not conclusive)

Medical Appointments

Please make medical, dental and optician appointments outside of school hours wherever possible- school holidays are a good opportunity to book dentist and optician appointments ahead of time. Barnet schools are working with local health organisations to prioritise appointments for children out of school hours. The school acknowledges that sometimes an urgent appointment, particularly a hospital appointment is unavoidable during school hours.

In cases of medical/dental appointments children are expected to return to school following the appointment and attend school before the appointment. We may ask to see proof of any medical/dental appointments in order for us to authorise the absence eg appointment card, copy of prescription, screenshot of doctor's notes. In cases of recurring absences for illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

Staff will make every effort to telephone families where children have failed to attend school in time for morning registration. However, it should be noted that you are still expected to contact the school yourself on the first day of your child's absence. Regular information will be sent alerting you to attendance issues. These follow Government guidelines.

How will I know if there is a concern about attendance?

The school has a series of standard letters which are sent throughout the school year to draw parents attention to attendance below 90%. There may well be good reasons for high level of absence, such as religious observance or a serious illness but these letters are in line with best practice and ensure families are made aware of the amount of school missed as early as possible.

Leave of absence requests

We are not permitted to authorise leave of absence for holidays during term time. Parents may request permission for an absence in exceptional circumstances. Permission **must** be sought in writing, well in advance (3 weeks minimum) for any known absence of one day or more giving details of the reasons for your request. An absence request form must be completed and returned to the office. Permission needs to be granted before any arrangements are made, including travel arrangements. The form is available from the office or via the school website.

Please note, the Headteacher has the right to refuse your request for leave of absence having given consideration to:

- The reason for the request and any relevant documentation
- Previous requests for term time absence

- Overall attendance of your child- term time leave will not be authorised where attendance is below 96%.

If an absence request is not authorised and you still remove your child from school, the absence will be recorded as such in the class register. The Education Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Barnet will be informed and, after consultation with them, a fixed penalty notice might be issued. If a child fails to return to school on the expected date, any extra days will be unauthorised and, after consultation with the Education Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Barnet, a fixed penalty notice might be issued, unless a valid reason is given and accepted by myself.

If a child fails to return to school after 10 days from the expected date and no valid reason has been given for the continued absence, the process of removing the child from the school roll may be put in action. The Headteacher will not authorise your child's absence if the timing coincides with End of Key stage tests.

Will Religious observance days be authorised?

Religious observance days will always be authorised. Extra days tagged on before or after the religious observance days will not be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances and only at the Headteacher's discretion. These will be treated as "Leave of Absence", as detailed above. There are differences between religious observance days and national holidays for different countries. The Education Welfare Team advises that national holidays are not authorised.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

We work hard as a school community to ensure that children enjoy school and most children look forward to being at school. You can support your child's attendance by making sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Read communications from school and communicate with your child's teachers. Show your child, by your interest that you value their education and ask them to share what has gone well at school.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

On occasion children struggle with school attendance for a whole range of reasons. These are resolved successfully for the child when school and families work together. Contact a member of staff immediately and discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons:

- Difficulties with school work
- Separation anxiety from a parent
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Family difficulties

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The Education Welfare Officer is based at:

Education Welfare Team
North London Business Park, Building 4
Oakleigh Road South, N11 1NP
(Tel: 0208 359 7684)