

Attendance Policy

Last Review: June 2026
Update: October 2026
Next Review: By the end of the Autumn Term, 2027
Committee: Inclusion

This policy should be read alongside the Department for Education's statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (July 2026), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, and 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2026).

1. Introduction

- Regular attendance is essential to pupils' attainment, wellbeing, safeguarding, belonging and future opportunities. JCoSS will promote high attendance and punctuality, identify emerging absence early and work with pupils and families to remove barriers to attendance.
- Pupils may experience complex barriers to attendance, including medical needs, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mental health or emotional needs, family circumstances, safeguarding concerns and school-based factors. For pupils of compulsory school age, parents have a legal responsibility to secure regular attendance. JCoSS will work with families and, where appropriate, the Local Authority and other services to understand and address barriers before they become entrenched.
- The school will have regard to the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments where required. Expectations for attendance remain high for all pupils, but support will be adapted to individual need, including for pupils with SEND, long-term health conditions and other protected characteristics.
- Persistent absence (PA) means missing 10% or more of possible school sessions. Severe absence (SA) means missing 50% or more of possible sessions. These are attendance measures, not penalty-notice thresholds.
- Where patterns of absence may indicate a safeguarding concern, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures. Prolonged or repeated absence can be a warning sign of neglect, abuse, exploitation or other harm.

2. Action by the School

2.1 Leadership and whole-school responsibility

- JCoSS will maintain a positive, proactive culture in which attendance and punctuality are everyone's responsibility. Staff must take accurate registers and report concerns promptly. Attendance records are legal records and may be relied upon in safeguarding work, statutory returns and legal proceedings.
- Senior Attendance Champion / senior leader responsible for whole-school attendance: Mr Benjamin de Jong, Deputy Headteacher: KS5 & Attendance. Contact via JCoSS on 020 8344 2220 or admin@jcross.barnet.sch.uk. The Senior Attendance Champion has strategic responsibility for attendance and reports regularly to the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.
- Day-to-day attendance enquiries should be directed to Student Services via 020 8344 2220 or studentservices@jcross.barnet.sch.uk. Heads of Year, Key Stage Behaviour Leads (KSBL) and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) support casework and intervention.

2.2 Registration and punctuality

- JCoSS will take the statutory attendance register at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session, at the same time for all pupils required to attend that session. The published 2026/27 school day begins at 8.30am. Morning Registration/Form Time is 8.30-8.50am; the morning register opens at 8.30am and closes at 9.00am. A pupil arriving after 8.30am but before the register closes is recorded as late (Code L). A pupil arriving after the register has closed is recorded as late after the register closed (Code U), unless another national attendance code accurately describes the circumstances. Code U is an unauthorised absence for that session. PM registration is included within Lesson 5 Monday to Thursday and Lesson 4 on a Friday, in line with the published timetable. The afternoon register closes at the end of the school's defined window. The afternoon register is taken at 14.20 Monday to Thursday and 12.30 on a Friday. It remains open for 30 minutes. Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as late after the register has closed (U), unless another attendance code applies. Published early-closure arrangements apply where relevant. The appropriate national code will be used for transport disruption or other unavoidable circumstances; local or non-statutory codes will not replace the national attendance code.
- All registers, including for resourced provision, alternative/off-site provision and supervised Sixth Form sessions, must be reconciled promptly so that the school knows where pupils are and statutory AM/PM marks are complete.
- Pupils arriving after morning registration starts at 8.30am must follow the school's late-arrival procedure. Where there is no reasonable explanation, the school may apply a proportionate behaviour response, according to the Behaviour for Learning policy. Repeated lateness will be reviewed as an attendance concern; Code U sessions contribute to unauthorised absence and may contribute to the national penalty-notice threshold.
- Punctuality will be reviewed routinely by Heads of Year, KSBLs or the attendance team. Any legal action will follow the national framework and Barnet's current Local Code of Conduct.

2.3 First-day response and unexplained absence

- Where a pupil who is expected to attend is absent without a known reason, Student Services will make first-day contact by email and/or telephone and record the outcome. If contact is not established, or the circumstances create a safeguarding concern, the school will escalate proportionately, which may include further calls, contact with emergency contacts, a welfare/home visit, liaison with other professionals and/or referral to the Local Authority or police as appropriate.
- Where Code N (reason for absence not yet established) is used initially, the school will establish the correct reason promptly and amend the register within the period permitted by statutory guidance; if the reason cannot be established, the appropriate unauthorised absence code will be used.

2.4 Monitoring, support and intervention

- Teachers and pastoral staff will refer attendance concerns promptly. The attendance team will analyse attendance regularly at individual and cohort level, including vulnerable groups. Emerging concerns will be addressed early through communication with families, meetings, reasonable adjustments and coordinated support. The school will hold regular attendance meetings with the EWO/Local Authority as appropriate. Formal support, notices to improve, penalty notices and prosecution may be considered where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or not appropriate, in line with the national framework and Barnet procedures.
- For pupils approaching or meeting persistent absence, the school will establish the reasons, agree a plan with clear actions and review points, consider additional services where needed, and monitor whether attendance improves. For severely absent pupils, intensive and coordinated support will be prioritised.
- For pupils with SEND, medical or mental-health needs, support will be tailored to the individual. A temporary part-time timetable will be used only in very exceptional circumstances, will be time-limited, agreed with the parent/carer (and pupil where appropriate), regularly reviewed, include an end date and reintegration plan, and will not be used to manage behaviour. The Local Authority, social worker and/or EHC plan team will be involved where required.
- Low attendance will not automatically prevent a pupil from taking part in an educational visit. Decisions about optional or non-curricular activities may take attendance into account only where this is proportionate and case-specific, and after consideration of safeguarding, SEND, medical needs, reasonable adjustments and the educational purpose of the activity.

2.5 Requests for authorised absence and religious observance

- Leave of absence during term time may be granted only where the Headteacher (or authorised delegate) is satisfied that exceptional circumstances apply. Each request will be considered individually. Parents/carers should apply in advance wherever possible and provide sufficient information for a decision to be made.
- Decisions will take account of the specific circumstances and purpose of the request, the pupil's individual needs and stage of education, the impact of the proposed absence and the information provided. Holiday or leisure travel will not normally amount to exceptional circumstances. The school will not operate blanket rules that automatically grant or refuse discretionary leave without considering the individual request.

- The decision will be communicated by letter signed by the Headteacher and will indicate whether the absence is authorised, unauthorised or a mixture.
- Absence immediately before or after a school holiday or festival will be considered using the same statutory principles as any other absence. It will not automatically be unauthorised solely because of its timing. Where illness is reported, the school will apply the illness and medical-evidence principles below. Unauthorised leave may be referred to the Local Authority for a penalty notice where the national and local criteria are met.
- Religious observance will be recorded using Code R only for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. The school will authorise, at its discretion, 1 day (or 2 half-days) of absence for a student's Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebrations. Absence beyond this will be unauthorised, and the student's attendance record will be taken into account before any absence is authorised.

2.6 Illness, medical appointments and pupils with health needs

- Parents/carers should notify the school promptly when illness prevents attendance. In most cases, that notification will be sufficient and medical evidence will not be routinely required.
- The school may ask for reasonable medical evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of illness or where illness is prolonged or repeated and further information is needed to understand and support the pupil. The school will be flexible about the form of evidence and will avoid unnecessary burdens on families and health services.
- Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours where reasonably possible. Where an appointment during school time is necessary, the appropriate national attendance code will be used for the time required.
- Where the school has reasonable grounds to believe a pupil will miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively in the current school year, because of sickness, it will make the required sickness return to the Local Authority and work with the Local Authority to ensure suitable education and reintegration support are considered.

2.7 Unauthorised absence, notices to improve and penalty notices

- Where unauthorised absence is causing concern, the school will normally provide support and clear expectations for improvement. A Notice to Improve may be used where appropriate under the national framework and Barnet's Local Code of Conduct, with a defined improvement period and clear consequences if attendance does not improve.
- Where the criteria are met, the school may request that Barnet issue a penalty notice. For a first penalty notice to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within a rolling three-year period, the amount is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice within that period is £160 with no reduced rate. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within the rolling three-year period; alternative legal action will be considered where appropriate.
- The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The 10 weeks may span terms or academic years, and qualifying unauthorised sessions can arise from different types of unauthorised absence, including Code U. This

is not the definition of persistent absence. A penalty notice may also be considered below the national threshold only where this is permitted by Barnet's current Local Code of Conduct and the individual case justifies it.

- Penalty notices are issued to each liable parent in respect of each pupil. Decisions will take account of the individual circumstances, previous notices and the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and relevant education law.

2.8 Children absent from education and removal from the school roll

- A pupil will be removed from the admission register only where one of the statutory grounds in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is fully met. This includes, in the relevant circumstances, specified cases where a pupil fails to return after granted leave and cases of prolonged continuous absence. The school will complete the required joint reasonable enquiries/efforts with the Local Authority, consider whether sickness, unavoidable cause, safeguarding, support or enforcement action remains relevant, and make the required Local Authority returns before deletion. A deletion will not be backdated.
- For continuous unauthorised absence, the 2024 Regulations include a statutory ground that may apply after 20 school days, subject to all legal conditions being met and required joint school/Local Authority reasonable efforts having been completed. The school will not use an informal "10-day missing child" rule to remove a pupil from roll.
- Any unexplained or prolonged absence that raises safeguarding concerns will be managed under the school's safeguarding and children-missing-education procedures, irrespective of whether removal from roll is being considered.

3. Action by Students

Students are responsible for punctuality and regular attendance.

- Students should attend all of their lessons on time, equipped and ready to learn.
- Students who arrive after 8.30am must follow the late-arrival procedure in the Heart Space. After 9.00am they must sign in at Student Services so that the statutory register and safeguarding record can be updated accurately.
- Students who experience difficulties that may affect attendance should speak to their form tutor, Head of Year, KSBL, a member of the pastoral/SEND team or another trusted adult. The school will respond promptly, seek to understand the barrier and agree appropriate support.

4. Action by Parents/Carers

- For pupils of compulsory school age, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance at the school where their child is registered. Parents/carers are expected to work with the school to address barriers and to attend meetings or engage with agreed support where reasonably required.
- Parents/carers should notify the school as soon as possible whenever a pupil cannot attend because of illness or another unavoidable cause, using the school's published absence-reporting route. They should provide the reason and expected duration where known and keep the school updated if the absence continues.

- The school determines the appropriate national attendance code. Where no satisfactory reason is established, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Decisions about discretionary leave rest with the Headteacher or authorised delegate.
- Parents/carers should arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where reasonably possible and provide appointment information when school-time attendance is necessary.
- Requests for exceptional leave should be made in advance, with as much notice and supporting information as reasonably possible. Parents should not make travel arrangements on the assumption that leave will be granted.
- Parents should inform the School of any significant change or influence in their child's life which may have an impact on attendance or learning.
- Parents/carers should ensure the school holds current telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts so that absence and safeguarding enquiries can be made promptly.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Strategic responsibility sits with the school's Senior Attendance Champion. Student Services, Heads of Year, pastoral leaders, SEND staff and the EWO contribute to monitoring and casework. Attendance data will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team, including overall attendance, persistent and severe absence, punctuality, unauthorised absence and the attendance of key pupil groups.
- The Governing Body will receive regular attendance information and hold leaders to account for implementation and impact. This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and earlier where statutory guidance, local procedures or school practice changes materially.
- The school will evaluate whether its attendance strategy is reducing absence, improving attendance for vulnerable groups and ensuring accurate registration. Pupil and parent experience will be considered as part of improvement work.

6. Sixth Form Attendance

6.1 Context and expectations

- Students at Key Stage 5 typically have 27 taught lessons per fortnight for examined courses in Year 12, and 27 in Year 13. In addition to this, students typically have 7 further timetabled lessons per fortnight including supervised study periods, Kvutzah and Jewish Education, all of which are compulsory.
- Students therefore have a number of 'free' periods throughout the week, and this policy is designed to address this, acknowledging also that many students travel long distances each day to attend school.
- Sixth Form students are expected to attend every timetabled lesson, Jewish Education, Kvutzah, supervised study and other compulsory activity, and to comply with the Sixth Form's agreed AM/PM attendance arrangements. Where the Sixth Form timetable permits a student to leave after their final required activity, they must follow the school's sign-out procedure. The school may restrict this privilege where attendance, punctuality, progress or safeguarding gives cause for concern.

- Where a pupil over compulsory school age has an agreed timetable that does not require them to attend a particular session or day, the school may record Code X for that session. Code X must not be used where the student was required to attend but did not do so.
- Sixth Form students may leave the school site between required activities only in accordance with Sixth Form sign-out and safeguarding procedures and must return punctually. The Sixth Form Team may restrict this privilege where there is a proportionate attendance, punctuality, progress or safeguarding reason.

*Until October half term, Year 12 students will normally be expected to remain on the school site until the end of their final timetabled or otherwise required session of the day. Following October half term, permission to leave the school site between required activities may be granted to Year 12 students as a discretionary privilege, following a review of their attendance, punctuality and conduct. As a general expectation, students should have attendance and punctuality of at least 95%. Any decision will take account of the student's individual circumstances and will be applied in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, including the school's duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students and to avoid unlawful discrimination. Where appropriate, relevant medical, SEND, safeguarding or other exceptional circumstances will also be considered.

6.2 Recording and reporting attendance in the Sixth Form

- The statutory attendance register will be maintained for Sixth Form pupils using the current national attendance codes. Code X is used only for a pupil of non-compulsory school age who is not required to attend the relevant session under the school's agreed attendance arrangements. When a Sixth Form student is required to attend and is absent, the appropriate authorised or unauthorised absence code must be used instead.
- JCoSS will maintain the statutory AM/PM attendance record for Sixth Form pupils and will additionally monitor lesson/activity attendance for pastoral and academic purposes. Internal lesson-attendance measures do not replace the statutory attendance register.

6.3 University visits and extended summer-school placements

- Requests to attend university/higher-education open days will be considered in advance using the Sixth Form's published process. As a school operating principle, students would normally be expected to limit school-time open-day absence to no more than three visits during the Sixth Form; individual exceptions may be considered where there is a clear educational reason.
- Extended university summer-school programmes during term time will be considered case by case by the Head of Sixth Form / designated senior leader, taking account of the educational benefit and impact on learning.
- Attendance, punctuality and academic progress will be relevant considerations, but will not operate as automatic bars: decisions will be individual, proportionate and take account of SEND, medical needs, safeguarding and reasonable adjustments.

6.4 Sixth Form attendance and punctuality concerns

- Attendance and punctuality are taken seriously in the Sixth Form because missed learning can affect progress, relationships and readiness for post-18 destinations. Sixth Form attendance and

punctuality will be reviewed at least fortnightly by Heads of Year and the senior leader responsible for KS5/attendance.

- Where attendance or punctuality falls below the school's published expectation (currently 96%+), or a concerning pattern emerges, the student may be placed on an attendance/punctuality report and a support plan may be agreed. Proportionate sanctions may be used where appropriate, alongside pastoral, SEND or medical support.
- Where appropriate, a student may be required to remain on site for the full school day for a defined review period, with clear expectations and support, until attendance, punctuality and/or academic progress improve.
- Attendance or punctuality concerns will not automatically result in withdrawal from public examinations or loss of a Sixth Form place. Any examination-entry decision will be made under the school's curriculum/examinations procedures on individual educational grounds. Any review of a student's continuing Sixth Form programme will follow the school's published Behaviour for Learning, Sixth Form Addendum procedures, take account of safeguarding, SEND/medical needs and reasonable adjustments, and be preceded by appropriate support and communication.

7. Statutory and related guidance

- Department for Education, Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) - statutory guidance.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the National Framework for penalty notices.
- Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education (September 2026).
- Department for Education, Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities.
- Department for Education, Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Equality Act 2010 and relevant SEND duties.
- London Borough of Barnet school attendance procedures and current Local Code of Conduct for penalty notices.

Policy review note: This redraft updates the June 2026 policy against statutory guidance current on 27 September 2026. School-specific items identified in comments should be confirmed before the tracked changes are accepted and the policy is published.