

Legal Requirements

Parents or guardians of students of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise under the provisions of the education act 1996

Aims

Balcarras aims for excellent attendance from all pupils. All pupils should aim for 100% attendance whenever possible. A minimum of 96% attendance is expected by all pupils and parents are encouraged to support students reaching these goals. For minor illnesses, such as a sore throat, headache or mild cold, pupils are encouraged to still attend school, where they will be supported and encouraged to attend as many lessons as possible.

This policy applies to main school pupils (Years 7 to 11)

Regular Attendance

Balcarras defines regular attendance as above 96%.

Holidays in Term Time

Pupils are not permitted to take holidays in term time. The correlation between good attendance and good exam results is very strong and missing lessons will lead to significant underperformance in examinations. In exceptional circumstances, parents may complete a form and send it to the Headteacher, explaining why exceptional provision should be granted. Only in rare and pressing situations will a holiday be sanctioned.

Illness

If a pupil is too ill to come to school, parents should:

- 1. Phone the school before 9:00am on the day of the illness and leave a message with the school's attendance technician.**
2. This procedure should be repeated on each day that the illness continues.
3. Provide an explanatory note to be given to the pupil's tutor upon the pupil's return to school.

If the pupil becomes well enough to come into school later in the day, parents should encourage this to happen. If a pupil's attendance rate falls below 90%, the

school will insist that parents take the pupil to their GP whenever further illness occurs, and written medical confirmation of attending a GP appointment from the surgery must be presented to the school. The school will also request a visit from the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) to the parents' house when attendance drops below 90%.

Medical Appointments

Parents should try and avoid school time when making medical appointments. When an appointment is unavoidable in school time, parents should inform the school 24hrs in advance of the appointment, and the absence will be recorded on the system as a medical appointment. Pupils should leave school with just enough time to reach the medical provider and return to school promptly after the appointment is over.

Absence for Extra Curricular Activities

Balcarras encourages pupils' participation in extracurricular activities. Pupils will sometimes need time away from school to participate in their chosen field.

Examples might include:

- Playing sport for a national or county side
- Performing in a drama production or TV/film role
- Instrumental performance for an orchestra
- A dance exam or a music exam

Parents must always e-mail the House Head to request any time off from school for special events. In all situations, professional discretion will be taken and close liaison with the pupil and parents will inform the school's decision. Where an absence is beneficial to the pupil's success in his/her chosen field and unlikely to significantly harm the pupil's education, then special permission will be granted to have time away from school.

Long Term Absence

Where a pupil has long term absence, due to an independent professionally diagnosed medical condition, the school will work closely with parents and all relevant outside agencies (GP, consultant, counsellor etc.) to ensure a programme

is in place to provide appropriate educational provision (within the limits of the school's funding and staffing).

Attendance Officer

A full time attendance officer works in the school. The role involves:

1. Ensuring the registers are taken every am and pm registration
2. Accepting phones calls from parents when pupils are absent
3. Contacting parents between 9:00am and 10:00am on the first day of absence if no reason has been received (although all parents should phone in before 9:00am whenever their child is absent). Contact will usually be made via e-mail to the parents e-mail address.
4. Checking the pm registration to see if any pupil is absent who was present at am registration, and take the necessary action, including informing the Head of House and parents.
5. Monitor for patterns of absence and keep HoHs informed if a pupil's absence is falling into a pattern
6. Liaise between the pastoral team and the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) about pupils whose attendance is a concern and further intervention is required
7. Send appropriate letter to parents when poor attendance is recorded.
8. Producing an accurate list of all absences. This will be printed and stored at main reception by 10:00am for each day, to be used in the event of an evacuation.
9. Producing accurate data, at regular intervals, to monitor attendance across the school

The attendance officer will produce the following data weekly:

1. List of pupils with attendance below 93% from 1st September
2. Attendance percentage for the week for each Tutor Group/House/Whole School
3. Attendance percentage since 1st September for each tutor group
4. Attendance percentage for each House since 1st September

This information will be disseminated to Headteacher, Deputy Head, Assistant Head i/c pastoral, SENCO, HoHs

Rewards

Rewards are regularly used to encourage good attendance. The following are some of the rewards used by the school:

1. The tutor groups with the highest attendance over 99% will be given a free tutor group breakfast every month
2. At the end of term assemblies, the list of all pupils with 100% attendance will be displayed on the board and congratulated
3. At the end of term assemblies, a draw will take place, in the form of names of pupils with 100% attendance will be chosen from a hat, for a voucher (usually to the value of £20, although this could change). Usually there is one voucher per one or two year group(s).
4. House assemblies will regularly display names of pupils with 100% attendance and celebrate their success.
5. A cinema trip will take place at the end of the summer term for all pupils with 100% attendance and also for the tutor group with the highest attendance in each year.

EWO (Education Welfare Officer)

The school employs a part time Education Welfare Officer. The role of the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) is:

1. Liaise with the school's pastoral team and the attendance officer to ascertain which pupils have poor attendance and need further intervention
2. Attend regularly the pastoral meeting on a Wednesday lunchtime.
3. Visit pupils' houses when requested; when a pupil is absent from school or when attendance is a concern.
4. Conduct meetings with parents whenever attendance is a concern and discuss strategies for improving attendance of their child in the future
5. Attend AIM (Attendance Improvement Meetings) held by the school with parents and ensure that the legal position is made clear.
6. Support the school in the creation of any necessary paperwork needed for prosecution for poor attendance.
7. Ensure the school is kept aware of any changes to legislation regarding school attendance.

Registration

All pupils will attend registration twice each day. This will take place at the following times:

am registration

8:55 – 9:00am (Mon - Fri)

Pupils should be heading towards their tutor rooms at 8:50am and be sat in their chair when the register is taken at 8:55am.

pm registration

2:15 – 2:35pm (Mon – Thurs)

1:50 – 2:10pm (Fri)

Pupils should be heading towards their tutor rooms at 2:10pm (1:45pm on Fri) and be sat in their chair when the register is taken at 2:15pm (1:50pm on Fri).

The school's Register Policy details requirements for completing registers.

Penalty Notices

In some cases it may be necessary for a parent to be issued with a penalty notice. These will be issued to parents when pupils have not met the attendance targets set out at an AIM meeting, or for pupils who continue to arrive late to school following an AIM meeting.

Heads of House

HoH have oversight of the attendance for the pupils in their house. HoH have responsibility to:

1. Promote and encourage outstanding attendance within their house
2. Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with
3. Contact parents over student absences where appropriate
4. Liaise with the attendance officer about concern pupils and ensure that the attendance officer is alerted to which pupils are on the concern list and HoH are informed immediately when they are absent
5. Liaise with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) over visits to parents' houses whenever pupils have concerning attendance
6. Organise and conduct meetings with parents whenever attendance becomes a concern

7. Organise AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) meetings whenever necessary
 8. Ensure, alongside the EWO (Education Welfare Officer), that paperwork from AIM meetings is accurate and promptly sent to parents
 9. Monitor attendance in the light of targets set at AIM meetings
 10. Ensure the necessary letters are sent out by the attendance officer based on attendance figures
6. For pupils who manage 100% attendance over 5 years, at the end of Year 11 a voucher (judged to be of value worthy of the achievement) will be awarded.

Prefects

Prefects are selected in the spring term of Year 10. There are a number of criteria used for prefect selection. One of the main considerations is that prefects must have an attendance rate of over 96% for the academic year so far, and must maintain this attendance rate or risk losing prefect status.

Appendix 1 - Letters

Letter 1 – Attendance Concern

Mr / Mrs Xxx
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53

Date

Dear Mr / Mrs Xxx,

Re: (student name) (tutor group)

Attendance Letter of Concern

I am writing with regard to Xxx's pattern of attendance. Since the beginning of the year he/she has had x days off, plus he/she has been late to school on x occasions. This means that at present his/her attendance is xx%. For information, last year Xxx's attendance was xx% and he/she was late on xxx occasions.

I do appreciate that poor health can sometimes have an unavoidable effect upon a child's attendance. However, government guidelines expect pupils to aim to achieve 100% attendance throughout an academic year. Please note, that the Balcarras attendance target for every pupil is 97.5%.

I trust that Balcarras can rely on your support and that we can work together to improve Xxx's present level of attendance. Should you wish to discuss the situation further please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

Xxx
Head of Xxx House

Letter 2 – Punctuality Concern

Mr / Mrs Xxx
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53

Date

Dear Mr / Mrs Xxx,
Re: (student name) (tutor group)

Punctuality Letter of Concern

I am writing with regard to Xxx's punctuality to school this year. Since the beginning of the year he/she has been late to school on x occasions. For information, last year he / she was late on xxx occasions and his / her attendance was xx%.

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children attend school. I do appreciate that poor health can sometimes have an unavoidable effect upon a child's attendance. However, government guidelines expect pupils to aim to achieve 100% attendance throughout an academic year. This includes being punctual at the start of both of the sessions of the school day.

I trust that Balcarras can rely on your support and that we can work together to improve Xxx's present pattern of punctuality. Should you wish to discuss the situation further please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

Xxx
Head of Xxx House

Letter 3 - Further Attendance Concern

Mr / Mrs Xxx
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53

Date

Dear Mr / Mrs Xxx,

Re: (student name) (tutor group)

Attendance and Punctuality Letter of Concern

I am writing with regard to Xxx's pattern of attendance. Since the beginning of the year he/she has had x days off, (plus he/she has been late to school on x occasions). This means that at present his/her attendance is xx%. For information, last year Xxx's attendance was xx% and he/she was late on xxx occasions.

I do appreciate that poor health can sometimes have an unavoidable effect upon a child's attendance. However, government guidelines expect pupils to aim to achieve 100% attendance throughout an academic year. Please note, that the Balcarras attendance target for every pupil is 97.5%.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. There is a risk that if your child's attendance remains at the current level a referral may be made to the local authority, who will start a legal process.

I trust that Balcarras can rely on your support and that we can work together to improve Xxx's present level of attendance. Should you wish to discuss the situation further please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

Xxx
Head of Xxx House

Letter 4 Attendance Follow-Up

Mr / Mrs Xxx
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53 Xxx

Date

Dear Mr / Mrs Xxx,

Re: (student name) (tutor group)

Attendance Follow-Up Letter of Concern

Further to my letter dated xx-xx-xx I am writing with regard to Xxx's pattern of attendance since the beginning of the year. The sheet enclosed gives details of his/her absence week by week.

As stated in my previous correspondence, government guidelines expect students to attend school for a minimum of 95% of the present academic year with the Balcarras target set at 97.5%.

It is disappointing that Xxx's attendance has deteriorated further since my last correspondence and at present is below the percentages stated above. I would appreciate it if you would discuss this matter with Xxx. Please note that I have spoken to him/her and hope that he/she appreciates the need to attend school as much as possible during the remainder of the year.

In order to authorise any future absences this year please note that some form of medical evidence will be required. This could be in the form of a note from a doctor, an appointment card, a photocopy of a prescription or a label from a prescribed medication with Xxx's name and the date on it. Any continued unauthorised absence will result in a referral the school's Education Welfare Officer.

I would appreciate if you could contact me on 01242xxx in order that an appointment can be made to review the present situation and set some plans for improving Xxx's attendance.

I trust that the school can rely on your continued support and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Xxx
Head of Xxx House

Letter 5 AIM Invite Letter

Mr / Mrs Xxx
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53 Xxx

Date

Dear Mr / Mrs Xxx,
Re: (student name) (tutor group)

WARNING LETTER TO PARENTS Balcarras School

Times attended: X out of a possible X sessions.

Further to our meeting on Xxx, I am writing with regard to Xxx's pattern of attendance since the beginning of the year. The sheet enclosed gives details of his/her absence week by week.

At the aforementioned meeting, it was made clear that Xxx needed to have regular attendance and punctuality to school. It was also stressed the need to supply evidence for any future absence. Since the meeting Xxx has been absent from school on X occasions and you have not provided acceptable proof of his / her inability to attend.

The 1996 Education Act Section 444(1) states:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996"

There is a risk therefore, that if Xxx's attendance remains at the current level a referral may be made to the Local Authority who will start a legal process. I would appreciate if you could contact me on 01242 545xxx so that an **Attendance Improvement Meeting** can be arranged.

We would also like Xxx to be present at the meeting, so that any concerns or worries can be discussed and hopefully resolved. Please note that the school's EWO (Education Welfare Officer), will be attending the meeting. Failure to attend the meeting will result in the meeting being conducted in your absence.

Yours sincerely,

Xxx
Head of Xxx House

Letter 6 AIM follow up

Mr / Mrs Xxx
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53 Xxx

Date

Dear Mr / Mrs Xxx,

Re: (student name) (tutor group)

WARNING LETTER TO PARENTS Balcarras School

Times attended: xx out of a possible xxx sessions - xx%

At the meeting you attended on xxxxxday (date) with myself (and other tcr) Xxx was set targets for his/her attendance. The hope was that he/she would achieve 100% attendance from the date of the meeting until the (target date), but it was agreed that Xxx was to have no more than two days absence for the rest of this term. It is therefore very disappointing that Xxx has already had (XX) days off school. I have enclosed Xxx's attendance record for you to see.

At the aforementioned meeting, it was stated the need for Xxx to have regular attendance and punctuality to school. It was also stressed the need to supply evidence for any future absence and that if this was not provided then it would go down as unauthorised.

The 1996 Education Act Section 444(1) states:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. There is a risk that if your child's attendance remains at the current level a referral may be made to the Local Authority who will start a legal process.

As Xxx has failed to meet the agreed targets I would like to invite you to an **Attendance Improvement Meeting**. We would also like Xxx to be present at the meeting, so that any concerns or worries can be discussed and hopefully resolved. Please note that the school's EWO (Education Welfare Officer), will also attend this meeting. Please contact me at school on 01242 545xxx to arrange a suitable time. If I do not hear from you I will set a date and inform you. Failure to attend the meeting will result in the meeting being conducted in your absence.

Yours sincerely,

Xxx

Head of XXX House

Letter 7 Warning Penalty Notice Attendance

Mr / Mrs Xxx
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53

Date

Dear Mr / Mrs Xxx,

Re: (student name) (tutor group)

Warning of Penalty Notice - Attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children attend school regularly. **This includes being punctual at the start of both of the two sessions of the school day.** If a child fails to do this then the parents or carers can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Practice the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers where a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

Xxxxxx has been absent from school for **(XX)** sessions in the previous **(XX)** weeks without prior authorisation or an acceptable reason being given to the Head Teacher. This absence has therefore been recorded as unauthorised in the school register. Please note there are normally 2 sessions in each school day.

I need to inform you that the level of **Xxxxxx's unauthorised absence places you at risk of a penalty notice and / or court action by the Local Authority.**

Please note, providing that there are no further unauthorised absences within the next 15 school days, which will start 2 days after the date of this letter, to allow for postage, a penalty notice will not be issued on this occasion.

I must draw your attention to the fact that should **Xxxxxx** have more unauthorised absences within the next twelve months, you may receive a penalty notice without further warning.

Yours sincerely,

D L Burke
Head Teacher

Letter 8 Warning Penalty Notice Punctuality

Mr / Mrs Xxx
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53

Date

Dear Mr / Mrs Xxx,

Re: (student name) (tutor group)

Warning of Penalty Notice (Punctuality)

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children attend school regularly. This includes being punctual at the start of both of the two sessions of the school day. If a child fails to do this then the parents or carers can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Practice the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers where a child has missed the start of a session (morning or afternoon) on numerous occasions without permission from the school.

Xxxxxx has missed the start of XX sessions this year without prior authorisation or an acceptable reason being given to the Head Teacher. Please note there are normally 2 sessions in each school day.

I need to inform you that the level of XXXXXXX's lateness for school places you at risk of a penalty notice and / or court action by the Local Authority.

Please note, providing that there are no further incidents of being late within the next 15 school days from receipt of this letter, which will start 2 days after the date of this letter to allow for postage, a penalty notice will not be issued on this occasion.

I must draw your attention to the fact that should XXXXXX have more incidents of lateness within the next twelve months, you may receive a penalty notice without further warning.

Yours sincerely,

D L Burke
Head Teacher