Barming Pre-School and Primary School
Part of the Orchard Academy Trust

Attendance Policy	
Headteacher: Mr C Laker **Chair of Governing Body: Rev W North**	
Date Policy Adopted:	September 2026
Policy Review Date:	September 2027
Signature of Chair of Governors:	Rev W North
Signature of Headteacher:	Mr C Laker
Policy Author: **Senior Leader Responsibility for/ Subject Leader Responsible for:**	Name: Miss H Rootes Responsible for: Teaching and Learning

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1. Introduction and Background

Barming Pre-School and Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in enabling pupils to achieve their full educational potential, develop positive wellbeing and access the broad range of opportunities available through school life.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have.

Where parents choose to register their child at school, they have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance entitled ***Working Together to Improve School Attendance*.** This guidance applies to maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. This policy reflects the expectations and duties contained within that guidance.

The academy recognises that absence is often a symptom of wider barriers or unmet needs rather than simply a compliance issue. We are committed to identifying barriers early and working with pupils, families and external agencies to remove those barriers and improve attendance through a support-first approach.

This policy aims to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil accesses their full educational entitlement.
- Promote excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Reduce persistent and severe absence.
- Support pupils and families experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Ensure statutory attendance duties are fulfilled.

As part of Orchard Academy Trust, the Trust Board and Local Governing Body will regularly review attendance information, monitor attendance trends, challenge underperformance and ensure statutory attendance responsibilities are fulfilled.

The academy follows the DfE statutory safeguarding guidance ***Keeping Children Safe in Education*** and recognises the importance of identifying children missing education and those at risk of becoming persistently absent.

2. Promoting Regular Attendance

At Barming Pre-School and Primary School we believe that developing good attendance habits starts from the moment a child joins our school community.

The Senior Attendance Champion is: **Miss H Rootes**

Promoting regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils, staff, governors and the wider academy trust.

The academy will:

- Promote a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Build positive relationships with families.
- Submit attendance data as required by the Department for Education.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality regularly.
- Celebrate excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Provide attendance information to parents.
- Intervene early when attendance concerns arise.

Ensure all staff receive appropriate attendance training as part of their safeguarding responsibilities and understand the importance of attendance within their role.

Monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups including pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, young carers, and pupils experiencing mental health or wellbeing difficulties.

Promote a whole-school culture where children feel safe, valued and motivated to attend every day.

3. Understanding Types of Absence

Every absence is classified as either:

Authorised Absence

Authorised absences include:

- Genuine illness.
- Emergency medical or dental appointments.
- Religious observance.
- Exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences include:

- Family holidays during term time.
- Shopping trips.
- Birthdays.
- Looking after siblings.
- Day trips.
- Arriving after registers close.
- Absences where no satisfactory explanation is provided.

3.1 Persistent Absence and Severe Absence

A pupil is classified as a **Persistent Absentee (PA)** when attendance falls below 90%.

A pupil is classified as **Severely Absent (SA)** when attendance falls below 50%.

The academy will closely monitor attendance of pupils within these categories and provide support where required.

Attendance support plans for persistently absent pupils will be reviewed regularly and at least termly to evaluate impact and identify any additional support required.

4. Absence Procedures

Parents must:

- Contact school **before 9.00am** on the **first day of absence.**
- Contact school each subsequent day of absence.
- Provide a reason for absence.
- Ensure their child returns to school as soon as possible.

The academy may request supporting evidence where appropriate.

Medical evidence will only be requested where it is considered reasonable and proportionate to do so, including where illness absences are frequent, prolonged, recurring or where there is genuine concern regarding the authenticity of an illness absence.

If a child is absent, the academy will:

- Contact parents on the first day of absence where no explanation has been received.
- Contact emergency contacts if necessary.
- Undertake welfare checks where appropriate.
- Make referrals where safeguarding concerns arise.

5. Punctuality and Registration

The school day operates as follows:

Event	Time
Gates Open	8:35am
Registration Begins	8:50am
Registration Closes	9:00am
End of School Day	As published annually by the school

Children arriving after 8:50am are marked late.

Children arriving after 9:00am will receive a U code unless a valid reason is accepted by the school.

In line with current DfE statutory guidance, attendance registers will be taken at the same time for all registered pupils during the morning session and during the required afternoon session.

The academy will monitor punctuality and work with families where concerns arise.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

The academy recognises that barriers to attendance may include:

- Physical health difficulties.
- Mental health difficulties.
- Anxiety.
- Family circumstances.
- Social or emotional needs.
- SEND needs.
- Safeguarding concerns.

Where concerns arise, the academy will work collaboratively with families and external agencies to identify and remove barriers.

Support may include:

- Attendance plans.
- Early Help support.
- Team Around the Family meetings.
- External agency involvement.
- Attendance contracts.
- Local Authority attendance support.

Where attendance concerns are linked to a pupil's SEND, disability, physical health or mental health needs, the academy will consider whether reasonable adjustments are required under the Equality Act 2010.

Time-limited phased returns may be considered where appropriate and will include clear reintegration plans, review dates and success criteria.

Remote education will only be used as a temporary and exceptional measure and will not replace full-time school attendance except where absolutely necessary and as part of a planned reintegration strategy.

Attendance support contact:

Mrs Colclough
office@barming.kent.sch.uk

7. Local Authority Attendance Support

Kent County Council Attendance Services may work alongside the academy where attendance concerns persist.

Parents are expected to engage positively with support offered by the school and Local Authority.

Where support is unsuccessful or not engaged with, formal legal intervention may be considered.

8. School Attendance and the Law

Parents have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children receive suitable full-time education and attend the school at which they are registered.

The academy operates in accordance with:

- Education Act 1996
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

9. National Framework for Penalty Notices

The national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice is:

10 sessions (normally 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period.

Penalty Notices currently operate as follows:

- First offence: £160 per parent, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Second offence within three years: £160 per parent.
- Further offences may result in prosecution.

Term-time leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

10. Deletion from Roll

When a pupil leaves the academy, parents must provide:

- New address.
- Name of new school.
- Date of leaving.
- Relevant contact information.

The academy will meet all statutory duties relating to admissions, deletions and children missing education.

11. Attendance Data

The academy will analyse attendance data regularly to:

- Monitor attendance trends.
- Identify attendance concerns early.
- Support vulnerable pupils.
- Reduce persistent absence.
- Reduce severe absence.
- Evaluate attendance interventions.

Attendance information will be reviewed regularly by school leaders, governors and Orchard Academy Trust to ensure appropriate challenge, accountability and continuous improvement.

Particular attention will be given to vulnerable cohorts including pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, young carers and pupils experiencing physical or mental health barriers.

Appendix 1

DfE Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance (July 2026 Edition)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a4f9ec6a6586e258d371bd0/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf

Appendix 2

Kent County Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct
https://www.kelsi.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/62126/KCC-Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct.pdf

Appendix 3 – Illness Absence Guidance

https://secureschools.essex.gov.uk/DisplayDocument.aspx?DocID=276

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/626669cb8fa8f523b7221b98/UKHSA-should-I-keep-my_child_off_school_guidance-A3-poster.pdf

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

DfE external document template (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:
Name: Miss H Rootes
Email address or contact details: office@barming.kent.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents/carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:
Name: Mrs K Jillians
Email address or contact details: office@barming.kent.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents/carers should contact for more individual support with attendance (Attendance Officer):
Name: Mrs S Colclough
Email address or contact details: office@barming.kent.sch.uk