

Supporting good attendance during the winter months

Pupils are expected to attend school every day unless they are genuinely too unwell to do so. As we move into the colder months, it is normal for children to pick up the occasional minor illness. Typically, these minor bugs do not require time away from school.

Being in school every day supports children's learning, wellbeing and friendships. We recognise that parents and carers want to make the best decision for their child, and we are here to support you if you are unsure whether your child is well enough to attend.

If your child is not feeling at their best, practical steps such as getting a good night's sleep, eating regular meals and drinking plenty of fluids can help. We also encourage pupils to speak to a member of staff if they feel unwell during the school day.

Simple steps to help prevent illness

Families can help reduce the spread of illness through regular handwashing with soap and water. We also encourage all pupils to follow the "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it" approach: use a tissue for coughs and sneezes, put it straight in the bin and wash hands afterwards. If a tissue is not available, children should cough or sneeze into their elbow.

Public health advice recommends the seasonal flu vaccination for eligible children and young people.

Term Time Holidays

We ask that all family holidays are planned within the published school holiday periods, as we do not authorise holidays during term time. Regular attendance is essential to a child's education, and time away from school can have a significant impact on learning, progress and wellbeing.

While it may seem that a short period of absence will have little effect, pupils who miss school can miss important knowledge, skills and learning experiences that are difficult to fully replicate. Even a day or two of absence may mean missing part of a sequence of lessons, making it more challenging to build on future learning. Additional support is often required to help pupils catch up when they return, which can also impact the support available to other pupils.

We understand that family time is important and appreciate the challenges some families face when arranging holidays. However, we encourage all parents and carers to schedule holidays during school breaks so that pupils can benefit fully from their education.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Unauthorised absences may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. Any money collected through Fixed Penalty Notices is paid directly to North Somerset Council, not to the school.

An unauthorised absence may be incurred when a child is on holiday, arrives after the register closes or when we are not notified of the reason for your child's absence as per our policy.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued as follows:

First penalty notice: £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Second penalty notice: If issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, the penalty will be £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days.

Monitoring and Supporting Attendance

Many families already use the My Child at School (MCAS) app to monitor attendance, and we encourage parents and carers to engage with this regularly. We will also share your child's attendance percentage by email at the start of Term 2.

Where attendance falls below 90%, a member of the year team will make contact to discuss how we can work together to improve attendance. Pupils with attendance below 90% are classified as persistently absent, and this level of absence can have a significant impact on educational progress, wellbeing and social development.

Our approach is intended to be supportive. We recognise that there can be a range of barriers to attendance, and we are committed to working in partnership with families to understand and address these wherever possible.

Reporting Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day that the academy is open unless they are genuinely too unwell to do so. Minor illnesses should not normally prevent a child from attending school.

If your child is too unwell to attend, please notify the academy before 8:30am on the first day of absence. If the absence continues, you should contact the academy on each subsequent day unless alternative arrangements have been agreed.

Absences can be reported by:

- Telephone: 01934 422 000 (Option 2)
- Email: attendance@ba.clf.uk
- Speaking with the Academy Office in person

Where there are concerns about the reason for an absence, or where a pupil has been absent for an extended period, the academy may request further information or evidence. In some circumstances, a home visit may be undertaken to ensure that appropriate support is offered and that the pupil's welfare is safeguarded.

We appreciate the support of parents and carers in helping us ensure that all pupils attend regularly and are able to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

Failure to report your child's absence will result in your child's absence being recorded as unauthorised and can lead to fixed penalty notice.

Punctuality and Arrival at School

Arriving at school on time is an important part of supporting good attendance. Being punctual helps pupils settle positively into the school day, engage fully in learning and develop good habits that will benefit them throughout their education and beyond. Late arrival can result in pupils missing important information, routines and learning opportunities at the start of the day.

Students are welcome on site from 8:00am and can access our free breakfast provision before school.

To ensure a prompt start to the day:

- All students are expected to be in their tutor room by 8:45am.
- Students arriving after 8:45am will be recorded as late, and parents/carers will be notified by text message.
- To arrive at tutor on time, pupils should be through the school gates well before 8:45am.

From Term 2, the Broadoak Gate and Uphill Gate will close at 8:40am. This will help ensure that pupils have sufficient time to reach their tutor room before registration begins.

Pupils arriving after 8:40am should enter the academy via the main school entrance and use the designated student entrance. Pupils who arrive significantly late will be signed in via main receptions and welcomed by the School's Attendance Link Worker. Where appropriate, a conversation will take place to understand any barriers to punctuality and to ensure that parents/carers are aware of their child's arrival time, this may involve an immediate phone call home.

Where a pupil experiences ongoing difficulties with punctuality, we will work with families to identify and address any underlying issues. However, persistent lateness can have a significant impact on attendance and learning. In some cases, where lateness becomes a serious or recurring concern, formal attendance procedures may be considered, including the potential for a penalty notice in line with local authority guidance.

If your child arrives after the register closes, they will receive a 'U' code which is counted as an unauthorised absence. This can lead to fixed penalty notice. We appreciate the support of parents and carers in helping pupils arrive on time each day so that they can make the most of the learning and opportunities available to them.