

Never look down on anybody unless you are helping him up. Jesse Jackson

Barley Lane School

Friendship, Optimism, Hardwork

3rd February 2021

Dear All,

We receive a great deal of information and “guidance” from the government specifically the Department for Education and something arrived yesterday that I want to share with you.

Attendance of vulnerable children in schools

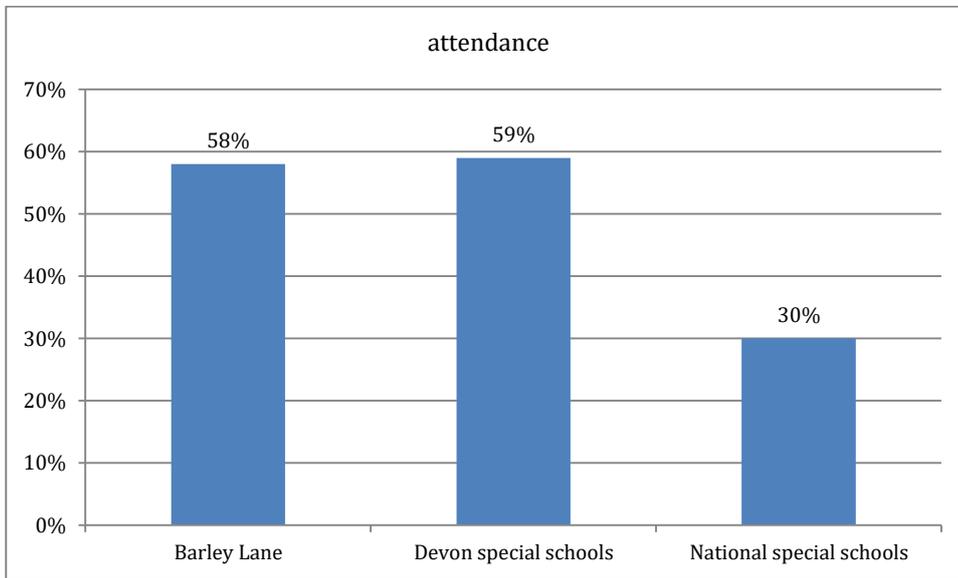
Thank you for the huge efforts you and your teams have made during the period of national lockdown to ensure [vulnerable children](#) are strongly encouraged to attend school. To support schools, we have strengthened our [guidance](#) on vulnerable children with a social worker and emphasised that we expect them to attend (subject to public health advice), given their safeguarding and welfare needs. Although attendance is not mandatory, it is vital that you continue to work together with the parent or carer, local authority and where applicable, social workers, to explore the reason for any absence.

Our guidance also makes it clear that parents and carers of vulnerable children who have not requested a place for their child have the option to return to that decision and should talk to their education setting and social worker (if they have one) to do so. Discussions with parents or carers, and social workers should focus on the welfare of the child or young person, ensuring that they can access appropriate high-quality education and support. There may be children and young people who are newly vulnerable and may now need the support of a face-to-face place now, where they might not have previously. We know you will be keeping this under regular review as you check in on your pupils.

It is then important for me to encourage you again to send your children to school but also to again make clear it is not “mandatory” so those of you who choose to keep your sons at home can do as long as you and they are happy and safe but significant too is you can change your mind as some of you have done.

It remains true as I shared with you in my last letter that *“every request (for more schooling) is seriously considered and creative solutions looked for and any unexpected capacity redistributed and nothing is wasted but equally new risks and demands also emerge but either way every day and led by Mr Jones every bit of capacity we have got is used. Meanwhile that dialogue and conversation between you and the teachers and support staff is so, so important in understanding each other and the decisions made and keeping us united.”*

Michael



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