



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Review Date: April 2024
Signed By:
Approval Committee: Governing Body

Attendance Statement

It is essential that children and young people form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that good attendance is maintained throughout their school career. This is particularly important following the disruption to education during and following the Covid Pandemic. As a school we work closely with the schools that make up the Christchurch Learning Partnership to ensure that there is a consistent approach to school attendance. It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

At Burton School we believe:

- It is important that pupils are in school on time. Timekeeping is not only important in obtaining maximum benefit from education, it is also a key skill for adult life. Lateness is monitored by the schools and contributes to absence rates.
- We will monitor the attendance of our pupils and work closely with the Local Authority's Early Help Navigators and School Attendance Service to support children and young people whose attendance levels are causing concern. This will include liaison between schools regarding siblings in more than one school.
- Whilst we understand that children do become ill on occasions, children who lose a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning. If a child's health continues to affect their education, schools are obliged to make a referral to the School Health Service to ensure that appropriate medical advice and support is provided.
- It is our responsibility and duty to follow up where interventions are not having the desired impact on improving attendance and to make a referral to Children's Services where this remains a concern.
- If a child is ill, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that they inform the school. The schools will operate a targeted 'Unexplained Absence' system, which means they will contact parents to ask why their child is not in school and when they are expected to return.
- No leave of absence will be granted during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. For this reason, should parents wish to take their child out of school for any leave of absence (holidays or otherwise) requests will not be routinely granted. It is essential that any requests for leave of absence are discussed with the Headteacher prior to the request being made in writing. Any absence which has not been authorised by the school will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and this has the potential to impact on your child's overall absence figure and could result in legal action.

Further details of the specific procedures in place to support good attendance and punctuality can be found in the Attendance Flow Chart. The attendance and punctuality strategy can be found at the end of this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the BCP Penalty Notice Code of Conduct ~ August 2024; and the schools 'Absence, Children Missing in Education – Guidance and Procedures ~ Oct 2022.

It also takes into account the guidance in the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education which highlights how absence can be a sign or symptom of safeguarding concerns, especially for vulnerable pupils.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absences include:

- Illness that deems a child 'unfit' for school.
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged out of school hours.
- Days of religious observance
- Attendance at other events (ie sporting, musical) or examinations as agreed in advance with the Headteacher.
- Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Headteacher

Should a parent believe absence should be authorised but does not meet the above criteria it is vital that they contact the school to discuss the absence well in advance.

Note: "Regulation 7 of 2006 Education (England) Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupils except where an application has been made **in advance** and the proprietor considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application." It should be recognised that the amendments **remove reference to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days**.

The amendments make it clear that a Headteacher **may not grant** any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absences

All absence from school, including late attendance after the close of registers, other than the above will be recorded as unauthorised. Close of Registers for this school is at 9:10am.

Responsibilities

Students:

- Have a responsibility to attend school regularly, on time, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Have a responsibility to ensure that their lifestyle beyond school does not, in any way, adversely affect their ability to attend school regularly, punctually and in a fit condition to learn. During the primary phase this is a shared responsibility with parents.

Parents:

- Have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Must notify the school in line with the school's Attendance Strategy if a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late. A student's absence will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been given.
- Should work with the school to support good attendance and commit to engaging positively with the school should a child's attendance cause concern.

Updated April 2024

Schools:

- Should identify specific members of staff who will take responsibility for attendance. This includes class teachers, who are required to take registers and follow up on absence through to pastoral leaders who will liaise with parents as appropriate.
- Should identify a member of the senior leadership team who will take responsibility for the individual school attendance strategy and will monitor and report on attendance patterns. This is the Headteacher.
- Will publicise their own specific strategies and processes regarding attendance to parents.

In addition the Headteacher will have responsibility for:

- Overall monitoring of individual and whole school absenteeism.
- Contacting parents to share concerns regarding high level or inappropriate absences or persistent lateness.
- Authorising leave of absence on behalf of the governing body.
- Making referrals to the Local Authority's School Attendance Service.
- Liaison with external agencies such as the School's Early Help Navigator or Social Care as appropriate.
- Reporting to parents, the governing body and the Local Authority as appropriate.
- Making decisions concerning school closure in line with Local Authority guidance.
- Informing the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, following the Local Authority's procedures for a Child Missing Education.
- Developing strategies and incentives to promote good attendance.

Governors:

- Will monitor overall attendance figures.
- Will work with the Headteacher and staff to improve attendance as required.
- Will liaise through the Chair of Governors with the Headteacher about school closure.

Local Authority School 5-19 Service & Attendance:

- Fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular basis.
- Will provide maintained schools with an Early Help Navigator / attendance officer who can support schools and parents in finding solutions to attendance issues and identifying and referring to appropriate support agencies.
- Will support schools in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school. Therefore a pattern of unauthorised absence, which can include **taking holidays in term time**, can result in a Penalty Notice or further legal action, as outlined in the school's Attendance Strategy.

<https://www.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/Schools-and-learning/At-school/School-attendance.aspx>

Removal of a pupil's name from the school roll

Deletion from the admission register of the name of a pupil (of compulsory school age) is permitted when:

- A school attendance order naming the school has been altered or revoked
- The pupil has been registered at another school
- The pupil has ceased to attend and the parents have satisfied the Local Authority that he or she is receiving full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at a school
- Transfer of the pupil's ordinary residence makes attendance at the school unreasonable (i.e. he or she has moved to another area)
- The pupil has failed to return to school within 10 days of the expiry of extended leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday unless the absence is because of sickness or some other unavoidable cause and both the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.
- The School Medical Officer has certified that the pupil's health is such that he or she is unlikely to benefit enough to attend before becoming legally exempted from attendance
- The pupil has been continuously absent for at least four weeks and, after reasonable enquiry, neither the school nor the Local Authority has been able to locate the pupil (NB: this means that the School Attendance Team and the school must agree. One cannot act alone)
- The pupil is known to have died
- The pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and he or she intends to leave
- In an independent school he or she has ceased to be a pupil
- In a maintained school, he or she has been permanently excluded but only when the school appeal process has been concluded or the parent decides not to appeal
- Having been admitted to the school for nursery education, he or she has not transferred to the reception class

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 means that all schools now have a duty to inform the local authority in all circumstances when a pupil is deleted from the register. The only exception is when a pupil has completed their final year of education.

Children Missing from Education

This refers to children who stop attending school and who are believed to have left the area without parents notifying the school and where the school has been unable to make contact:

- The school will try to make telephone contact.
- The school will write to the known home address.
- The school could make a home visit if appropriate.
- The school will make informal enquiries to relations or friends of the child and if the child has been missing, with no contact from parents or carers and no information as to where the child is for 10 days, a Child Missing Education Form will be completed and sent to the Local Authority.
- On receipt of such a referral the Child Missing Education representative in the Local Authority will complete checks to locate the child.
- The school will inform the Child Missing Education representative if the child returns to school.

If the school has any Child Protection concerns about the child it will follow the Child Protection Procedures and contact social care **immediately**.

See also 'Absence and Children Missing in Education ~ Guidance and Procedures'

Employment of children and young persons

The Law says:

The following rules apply until school leaving age. A child work-permit application should be completed by the employer.

A child reaches the end of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the school year during which he/she becomes 16. A work permit is not required after this date.

Children under 13 cannot undertake part-time work without a permit or licence (eg performance licence).

What we will do to support improved attendance

There are a number of reasons why a pupils attendance may be adversely affected. These could include:

- Illness
- Holiday
- Anxiety / Mental health
- SEND needs which make behaviour challenging
- Parenting capacity

We will monitor attendance and lateness at least half termly and inform parents where attendance is falling below an acceptable level (95%). The following are examples of ways that we would seek to improve and support pupil attendance and punctuality:

- Regular information sharing with parents about the consequences of poor attendance in leaflets and newsletters.
- Regular updates to parents regarding their child's attendance – this is also available on an on-going basis via the Arbor Parent Portal.
- Use of virtual Marvellous Me badges recognising good attendance
- Support from the pastoral support worker (PSW); Navigator; Early Help
- Use of the 'Dolphins' inclusion provision to support those who find the start of the school day daunting or challenging
- Explore ways to make the start of the day welcoming and reduce anxiety for pupils and parents (e.g morning playtime)
- Ensuring parents sign children in with a reason to aid monitoring and analysis
- Issuing Fixed Penalty Fines where other support has not had a positive impact
- Issuing Fixed Penalty Fines for **all** Unauthorised Holiday Absence which meets the criteria

This policy will be monitored by the Governing body and reviewed 2 yearly or in the light of new guidance.

Attendance Strategy 2024-26

Barriers to good attendance and suggested strategies:

School Refusal / Anxiety / Mental Health	Holiday	Illness	Parenting ~ often lates
Dolphins – use of thrive and pastoral space to gently ease them into the day Morning playtime – Continuation following trial. This has facilitated a more relaxed and engaging start to the day. Pastoral Support Worker – Making contact with pupils and parents to offer support; Inclusion team to door step if needed to support encouraging pupils to school and breaking habits; interventions to support anxiety in school Use of navigator / early help / referral to IRN (Integrated Rethink Network) panel meetings Thrive and pastoral support to explore underlying reasons and provide key adult.	Application form for all requested absence Leaflet to outline the impact of holiday and reinforce rules around authorisation Fixed Penalty notices issued for ALL absence due to holiday.	Admin assistant to maintain contact and provide advice about length of any required absences and expectations for return to school. PSW to follow up prolonged / repeat absence due to illness School Nurse contact details and drop ins advertised and offered to parents where pupils are regularly absent due to illness Explore use of GP scheme with local GPs to support persistent absence due to illness Request evidence of GP appointments and medication Use of Attendance Fast Track Process to set targets and issue FPNs for non improvement.	Support from PSW/ Early Help / Navigator/ Safer Families (volunteers) PSW - Attendance surgeries with recorded strategies and actions Use of Attendance Fast Track Process to set targets and issue FPNs for non improvement. Close main gate at drop off time to prevent habits of driving in to drop at office Insist parents complete the late arrival form stating reason for absence and signing – this will aid monitoring and provide stronger evidence of regularity of lateness

Procedures to support strategy:

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
KW to flag repeat offender and patterns noticed over days and weeks Follow up of all absence Day to day monitoring picked up by AT (HT) and JP (PSW) JP to monitor target pupils with historic patterns of poor attendance/ lateness	Half Termly – formal monitoring with letter sent to those whose attendance is below 95%. If no improvement over following half term, letter sent requesting a meeting with HT, DHT and PSW. If still no improvement, a further letter sent with more formal steps as needed – LA support / panel / Fixed Penalty Fine Attendance surgeries and Fast Track Process applied Consider reinstating interclass competition and reward for best attendance	All parent to receive a termly letter notifying them of their child's attendance, and recorded on end of year report. Attendance info always available on Arbor Parent Portal Termly MME badge sent for 100% attendance for that term Make it well known that all holiday absence will be fined