

Attendance policy

Bucklesham Primary School



Approved by:

Rachael Rudge/
Charlotte Gammons

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- › The link Governor for monitoring attendance is Charlotte Gammons.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- › Issuing termly letter to parents on their child's attendance

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence and issuing fixed penalty notices in liaison with the education welfare officer.
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rachael Rudge and can be contacted via the school office 01473 659389 admin@buckleham.suffolk.sch.uk

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office after the register is completed in the morning (ensuring late marks are identified on the register after 8:55am) and after lunch.

3.5 School office staff

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents to the Head teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- › Ensure late book is signed by parents or filled in by Office staff if the parent doesn't sign it.
- › Ensure the late book matches the register codes so all lates are recorded on the registers.
- › Record any lates past 9:15am as an unauthorised absence.
- › Run a weekly report for Headteacher on lates and absence levels below 95%.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:15am on the first day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45 – 8:55 am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff on 01473 659389 or emailing into the Office on admin@bucklesham.suffolk.sch.uk (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done by phoning the school office on 01473 659389 or emailing admin@bucklesham.suffolk.sch.uk

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed, will be marked as late (8:55am-9:15am), using the appropriate code, and parents will be required to sign the late book.
- › After the register has closed at 9:15am, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code, and this will be an unauthorised absence.

The education welfare officer monitors 'lates' every half term as part of monitoring attendance and may contact parents to notify them where their punctuality becomes a problem, and to offer support.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the local authority or the police.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- › Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance levels at the end of each term via a written report. This will inform them of their % attendance for their child(ren) and the number of lates, and whether their child's attendance is at risk, with the associated school actions if this is the case.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- › Where the Employer dictates when annual leave can be taken, and a letter from the Senior Manager of the company to this effect, is provided
- › Parents in the armed forces returning from overseas placement
- › Cultural issues for families returning to their homeland (being alert to considerations of forced marriages, FGM and trafficking)
- › Wedding of an immediate family member (up to 1 day).

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the School Office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will encourage good attendance in newsletters and will report attendance information to parents regularly at the end of each term. The Headteacher will monitor attendance closely and offer support to each family at risk of poor attendance. This support will be bespoke to the family. The class with the best attendance at the end of each half term will get a reward, such as extra breaktime.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Head teacher monitors and analyses attendance and absence data each half term with the education welfare officer to identify pupils that require support with their attendance. The school expects attendance to be at least 96% and will monitor any pupil whose attendance drops below 93%.

Parents may be contacted by phone or letter to discuss the reasons for their absence and to offer any support that the family may need, e.g., attending breakfast club or dropping off early to the front door to support punctuality in the morning. We tailor our approach according to the needs of the child and family.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level weekly
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to the Head teacher, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

The school will target unauthorised absence through careful monitoring of attendance data where attendance is below 90%, and may contact parents through letters, phone calls or meetings to discuss what support needs to be in place to improve the attendance for each child.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, every year by the Head teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: termly letter template to parents

Dear Parents,

Termly report of your child's attendance

Name of child:

% attendance since Sept:

Number of late marks since September:

Attendance levels are:

Please see the table below to see the impact and actions the school will be taking for the attendance level of your child.

Number of days absent	Attendance Percentage	Impact	School Actions
0-2 days absent in a school year	99% to 100%	Attendance Levels are Excellent Your child is accessing all learning opportunities	- Celebrate strong attendance in Friday's Celebration Assembly for classes - Positive encouragement and rewards for classes at the end of each half term
2.5-9 days absent in a school year	96% to 98%	Attendance levels are Good Your child has missed very few learning opportunities	- Update parents on their child's attendance termly via this letter
9.5-17 days absent in a school year	93% to 95%	Attendance levels are at risk Your child is at risk of underachieving due to missed learning	- Monitor attendance weekly to ensure it doesn't drop below 93%
18-25 days absent in a school year	90% to 92%	Attendance levels are at high risk Your child is at risk of high underachievement due to missed learning	- Phone call to family by Headteacher to discuss how we can support to improve the child's attendance. - Attendance letter will be sent home as confirmation of the phone call, informing parents attendance is at high risk - Fortnightly phone check-in by Headteacher for pupil and family

			- Identify support for pupil and family needed to improve attendance
Over 25 days absent in a school year	Below 90%	Attendance levels are now considered to be persistently absent Your child is at risk of serious underachievement and is now considered persistently absent	-Attendance letter sent home informing parents attendance is now worrying and considered persistently absent - Education Welfare Officer (EWO) consulted for support - Face to face attendance support meeting offered for parents and pupil - Daily check-in if absent by Headteacher or Office team for pupil and family - Weekly phone check-in by Headteacher for pupil and family - Family action plan to be considered if necessary

Attendance is a predictor of future exam success

The truth about attendance...
 Increase your chances of achieving strong passes at GCSE (9-5 grades)

- 94% attendance = Very good chance of achieving strong passes
- 93% attendance = Good chance of achieving strong passes
- 92% attendance = Fair chance of achieving strong passes
- 90% attendance = Less than 50% chance of passing with grade 4 and above
- 88% attendance = Less than 35% chance of passing with grade 4 and above
- <88% attendance = Less than 30% chance of passing with grade 4 and above

Did you know that if your child achieves 80% attendance over 5 years of education, they would miss an entire school year?

We are keen to work with all families to improve attendance and therefore give children the best chance of individual fulfilment and success in school. Please work with us to improve your child's attendance over the coming months and come and speak to me if we can support you in any way.

Kind regards
 Miss Rudge