



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Good attendance is directly related to a child's enjoyment and achievement at school and is vital to promote successful learning. We strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment whereby all members of the school community feel wanted and secure. We all take responsibility for welcoming a child into school and into the classroom, with a smile, whenever they attend.

Persistent or long-term absence has a negative impact in all areas of school life, not just on academic achievement but also on the development of key skills and friendships. Interrupted attendance makes teaching and learning difficult and undermines the educational process leading to educational disadvantage.

It is law that all children attend school. We expect all children to be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. However, we will challenge the behaviour of children and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

We understand that children are sometimes reluctant to attend school and that the reasons for this are varied and may be complex. We aim to resolve any problems with regular attendance by making early contact with parents and offering support including referral to the Outreach Worker. Where children are anxious about coming to school, the Outreach Worker can offer practical support and help develop strategies to manage anxiety and encourage attendance.

Aims

Our overall aim is to promote a whole community approach to improving attendance and punctuality.

- To improve the overall percentage of children at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for the whole school community, including parents, staff and children.
- To provide support advice and guidance to parents and children.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysis of attendance data
- To develop and maintain positive communication between home and school.
- To establish a system of rewards and incentives.
- To work together with the Local Authority Attendance Team and other services or agencies
- To recognise individual needs of children who have been absent for a prolonged period and who are returning to school.

What to do if a child is absent from school:

If a child is to be absent from school, parents should report absence by contacting the school office before 9.30am to report the absence. Contact must be made in one of the following ways:

- Telephone 0161 764 2017
- Email stpeters@bury.gov.uk
- In person at the school office.

Our procedures are as follows;

- If a reason for absence has not been provided before 9:30am a text will be sent out to remind you to contact school.
- If no contact has been made by 10:00am school will telephone to establish a reason for absence.
- If there is no reply on the telephone and we still have no reason for your child's absence, a member of staff will conduct a home visit to check that all is well.
- **If staff cannot make contact at this visit the police will be notified.**

If an absence is expected to continue beyond three days, parents are asked to maintain regular contact with the school to indicate how long the child is likely to remain absent. The school's outreach worker may contact you beforehand to discuss your child's absence and any ways that the school can provide support.

When a child returns from an absence, parents should write a note to the teacher explaining the reason for the absence.

Please note: parents must provide school with at least two contact numbers.

Family Holidays

Family holidays should be arranged during school holidays. All absence is bad for a child's education. Due to new Government guidelines, from September 2013 (updated October 2018), the Headteacher cannot authorise any holidays in term time (except in very exceptional circumstances).

Parents must request permission from the Headteacher in advance of the holiday in writing. All requests are considered by the Headteacher whose decision it is to authorise the absence or not.

Where a pupil is absent from school without permission of the school, the parent/carer of the pupil may be issued with a £60.00 Penalty Notice per parent per child. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days the penalty increases to £120.00. If the notice remains unpaid after 28 days the Local Authority may commence proceedings under section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court.

In the event of an extended, unauthorised period of absence, the school will act in accordance with government regulations and local authority policy, which may result in a child being removed from the school roll.

If children are taken away for a two week holiday every year and have an average number of days off for sickness and appointments, then by the time they leave at sixteen, they will have missed a year of school.

Punctuality

We expect all parents and carers to ensure that children arrive at school on time. The school day starts at 8.45am. The responsibility for lateness and attendance rests with the parent and any concerns are raised with the parent and not with the child.

If a child arrives after 8.50am they will be recorded as late. Registers close at 9.30am and any child arriving after this time is treated as being late after registration which is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Doors are closed promptly at 8.50am. If a child is late for school, the child should be taken to the school office where their attendance can be recorded and any school meals orders taken. Each school day has two sessions and a separate attendance mark is obtained for each session. Afternoon registration is at 1pm for Key stage one and 1:15pm for Key stage two.

Monitoring unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absences will be reported to the Local Authority School Attendance Service via regular meetings to discuss the next appropriate action. If a child returns to school with a note that has an unacceptable reason for the absence then the class teacher will refer the note to the Outreach Worker. The Outreach Worker will then arrange to inform the parent or carer that the absence has been categorised as an unauthorised absence. If unauthorised absences continue then the Outreach Worker will liaise with the School Attendance Service.

Attendance Problems

We aim to support parents and carers to help remove any barriers which prevent a child attending school. These could be barriers which the child has or which the parent has. Our starting point is always one of support. In return, we expect parents to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful and we try to resolve attendance issues within school.

The School Attendance Service visits school regularly and will follow up any cases where difficulties remain unresolved. The School Attendance Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the School Attendance Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Rewards and Incentives

Good attendance is also promoted and encouraged by:

- Celebrating attendance and punctuality in weekly whole school assemblies
- recording excellent attendance on individual pupil records
- Reward pupils with excellent attendance
- Provide reward systems for any pupil defined to have made a special effort in attendance
- 100% attendance rewarded each term
- Children who achieve 100% attendance over the whole school year receive an award for excellent attendance
- Punctuality awards each term
- Giving parents and children the opportunity to work with the Outreach Worker to raise their levels of attendance
- Meeting with parents who are concerned that their child may be experiencing difficulties which may hinder their child's attendance at school
- Regular Attendance Reports to be sent home
- Regular Meetings between the Outreach Worker and the School Attendance Officer