

Attendance Policy



Burwell Village College Primary

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: 19 th January 2021
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Last reviewed on:	January 2021
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Next review due by:	September 2024
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Burwell Village College Primary School Pupil Attendance Policy

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to;

- Support children and their parents/carers to have the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- Take steps to ensure attendance meets or exceeds Government targets

Burwell Village College Primary is responsible for supporting the attendance of our pupils and for responding to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance. As a school we have a very high attendance level due to high quality teaching, a creative and relevant curriculum, enthusiastic pupils and supportive parents. We adopt a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters and encourage parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children, as this plays a major role in improving levels of attendance and punctuality and in reducing absenteeism.

Expectations

Parental Responsibility

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis arriving punctually and appropriately prepared for the day. Parents must ensure that their children enter school safely or are handed over to the staff on duty when the doors open. Parents have full responsibility for their children before the class doors open.

Parents/carers must ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should contact the **school office** on the first morning of absence before 9.00 am. A dedicated pupil absence answer machine is set up and can be accessed by ringing the school telephone number 01638 613103 #1. The school office can also be contacted by email, or in person. Parents/carers should call in every day their child is absent to keep the school up to date. If for any reason the school has not heard from a parent on the first day of absence then the school will make contact with the parent for an update.

Parents/carers must notify school immediately of any changes to contact details or home circumstances that may affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

School Responsibility

School will;

- Be open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year; 190 statutory school days and 175 days are available to use for holidays (weekends and holidays)
- Keep regular and accurate records (registers) of attendance and punctuality, absenteeism and lateness
- Monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- Keep parents informed of a pupil's attendance / absence at parent consultations as well as sending parents a record of their child's attendance for the school year with the school reports at the end of academic year.
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- Distinguish between absence which is **authorised** and absence which is **unauthorised** according to criteria laid down by the Department for Education (it is the decision of the Head Teacher as to whether or not an absence will be authorised);
- Meet regularly with the **Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO)** to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to LAAO
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the national expected level (96%)
- Submit absence returns to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, Department of Education (School Census) and any other professional body who may officially request the information (including Social Care).
- Celebrate good attendance through competitions, certificates etc.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in class.

Doors and gates open at 08:30. Registers are taken at 08:40. Teaching begins at 08:45. Registers are completed by 08:45. Children are late between 08:45 – 09:00. Absence is unauthorised if children arrive after 09:00.

COVID operational changes. If it becomes necessary due to COVID 19 guidelines or infections then bold type statements may be put in place.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every child.
- Registers are taken electronically via the secure SIMS system using codes (**Appendix 2**)
- Close of registers is at 9.00 am in the morning. In the afternoon registers close at 1.15 pm
- Children who arrive after doors have been locked will be recorded as a late arrival; children who arrive after the above register closing time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Any child arriving late **must** enter the school via the main entrance and must be signed in by a parent/carer using the electronic signing in system.
- Parents of absent pupils where a message has not been received will be contacted by the office on the first day of absence and any day thereafter when the registers are submitted.

Children leaving school during the day

During the school day the school staff are legally 'In Loco Parentis' and therefore must know where the children are during the school day.

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointment outside the school time
- **If children attend medical or dental appointments at the start of the school day, thus being absent for the register, but return promptly to school by 10.00 am, the school is able to change their attendance mark from M (absent for medical appointment) to present at school. After 10.00 am the mark will remain as 'M'.**
- Children must be signed out by an adult on leaving school and signed back in by an adult on their return
- If a child leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted and then the police if the child is not quickly found, unless the child is deemed to be at risk of harm, in which case the police will be called first.

Pupil's who are signed out for lunch must return in good time for afternoon session, and be signed back in by a parent/carer. This system is used in conjunction with class registers in case of evacuation.

Lunch break for KS1 pupils starts at 12.00 pm and afternoon school begins with registration at 13.00 pm.

KS2 pupils commence their lunch break at 12.00 pm and afternoon school begins with registration at 13.00 pm

School finishes at 15:20 pm when doors are opened to parents.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

In line with the Government's 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised unless circumstances **strictly** meet those described as 'exceptional'. These are currently stated as;

- a parent/carer terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;
- the parent is a member of the armed forces on leave from active duty abroad and can only have a family holiday during this period

The following do not meet the above criteria:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad
- Funeral leave for family members other than siblings or parent
- Weddings for family members other than parents – in respect of parent weddings only the day of the wedding will be authorised

This means that it is not possible to authorise a normal family holiday for any other reasons, including on the grounds of cost, available dates for flights or particular holidays and because it is difficult for parents to take leave from their work during school holidays. An application for any leave of absence must be made by completing the 'Leave of Absence Form' (attached) no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given on an individual case by case basis. If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

There are 190 statutory school days and 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available for use for family holidays. (**Appendix 3**)

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave

Burwell School follows the current legal advice from the Local Authority. Currently Penalty Notices will be issued by Cambridgeshire County Council for unauthorised leave where

- Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days or more) over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school under the exceptional circumstances rule will be subject to a penalty notice fine from the Local Authority without warning.

Where leave of absence has been requested and denied, the school is duty bound to advise parents by letter that if they choose to take their child out of school they will be subject to a Penalty Notice Fine by the Local Authority.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 (per parent, per child for each holiday) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

The Head Teacher, supported by the School Office Administrator, is the main person responsible for monitoring attendance. If a class teacher has particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, she/he should inform the Head Teacher.

Attendance is monitored regularly. The school has adopted the following Local Authority procedures for attendance as follows;

From September 2015 the Government changed their thresholds for school absence. The expectation is that all pupils will be at school for 100% of the time, this means 190 out of the possible 190 school days. A pupil is now classified as persistently absent if he or she does not attend for 10% of sessions making their attendance level 90% or below. Any pupil with unauthorised attendance of 90% or below may be issued with a penalty notice or a referral made to the LAAO. The previous figure for this was 85% attendance and 15% absence.

Through the Educational Welfare Officers, the Local Authority monitors school attendance levels very closely and uses the following guidance:

<p>Did you know that the government state that all primary school children are expected to be at school at least 95% of the time?</p>	<p>190 school days in each year</p> <p>190 days or 38 weeks for pupils to learn.</p>	<p>8 days absence</p>	<p>10 days absence - over 2 weeks.</p>	<p>13 days absence – 3 weeks.</p>	<p>19 days absence – that's 4 weeks of school</p>	<p>28.5 days absence – nearly 6 weeks or ½ term off school.</p>	<p>175 NON-school days a year to spend time on: family visits Holidays Shopping Household jobs Dentist Opticians Sleeping Relaxing Celebrating</p>
		<p>182 days of education</p>	<p>180 days of education</p>	<p>177 days of education</p>	<p>171 days of education</p>	<p>162 days of education</p>	
	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>SATISFACTORY</p>	<p>OF CONCERN</p>		<p>UNACCEPTABLE AND OF SERIOUS CONCERN</p>		
	<p>100%</p>	<p>96%</p>	<p>95%</p>	<p>93%</p>	<p>90%</p>	<p>85% Below</p>	
	<p>Best chance of success. Children get off to a flying start. They are more likely to make good progress and reach their full potential.</p>	<p>Less chance of success. Children find it harder to make progress.</p>		<p>Not fair on child to miss school for all this time. Children find it very challenging to make good progress.</p>			

Attendance of **100%** is deemed to be **good**.

Attendance which falls between **96-99%** is deemed **satisfactory**

Attendance between **96-93%** is deemed **of concern** and the initial attendance letter is sent indicating that attendance should improve and offers parents an opportunity to speak to the school regarding absences and any support they may need.

Attendance which falls between **93-90%** is deemed **unsatisfactory** and the school will send a second attendance letter indicating that attendance must improve. At this point parents may be invited into school to attend a meeting

with the Head Teacher. Often regular illness may indicate that there is an underlying medical issue which needs resolving through the GP or hospital. Further absences will only be authorised with medical evidence such as GP letter / appointment card. A referral to Cambridgeshire County Council may be made for a Penalty Notice to be issued or LAAO/Legal intervention initiated.

Attendance below **90%** is classed as **unacceptable and of serious concern** and the pupil becomes a **persistent absentee**. A third attendance letter is sent inviting the parents to meet with the Head teacher to discuss absence and to highlight any possible areas that need attention in improving attendance. A target is given of 4 weeks with no unauthorised absences, with a review and an additional 4 week period with no unauthorised absences. If improvement is seen then monitoring will return back to half termly. During this monitoring period all absence is unauthorised without medical evidence.

If during the above 8 week monitoring period there is further unauthorised absence of 8 sessions the case has reached the Local Authority's criteria for legal interventions.

Working in conjunction with other agencies:

The school works with other local and county agencies when dealing with pupils and families who may have attendance issues. These often include Looked after children (in care); Traveller pupils; pupils with Special Educational Needs, behaviour or medical conditions; and Child Protection / vulnerable families (see appendix 1)

These include the Locality Team, Educational Welfare Officer (LAAO), Social workers and Family Support Workers from the Locality Team. They are responsible for working with parents in order to support better home-school liaison and thereby promote improved levels of attendance and improved behaviour.

The school may also liaise with County services to support pupils with special educational, emotional & behavioural needs.

Educational Welfare Officer – referral advice

Formal referrals will usually only be accepted in relation to absence which has not been authorised by the school.

- A child missing from education (CME) missing from school for 10 days or more
- A pattern of irregular attendance has developed
- A period of entrenched non-attendance has begun
- Communication by the school to the parents has met with little or no response
- There is evidence of a lack of parental co-operation in ensuring a child's regular attendance
- A pattern of post-registration truancy is persisting despite the school's efforts to prevent it;
- A parent withdraws a pupil from school having expressed an intention to educate him or her otherwise than at school (Elective Home Education)
- A pupil is withdrawn from school by the parents who are moving to another area and the school does not have a confirmed destination school/provider where the child will resume his or her education (such pupils will be treated as "children missing education")
- A pattern of persistent lateness has developed
- There are child protection concerns
- There are specific and identifiable welfare issues which are preventing a pupil from accessing education.

LAAO's provide schools with a variety of support, advice and documentation aimed at enabling the more effective management of school attendance.

If long term absence is due to medical needs and the child is placed in hospital then the school will liaise with the relevant Hospital Education Service. If a child is off on long term sickness then the school will arrange suitable home schooling.

Governors

Governors are aware of the attendance policy and are informed of any changes to attendance procedure. The policy is reviewed at least every three years.

Key Staff

The School Office Manager is the key member of staff with responsibility for collating registers, monitoring absence, contacting parents, liaising with LAAO and monitoring Children Missing Education (CME). This is then reported to the Headteacher who has overall responsibility for attendance.

Review

The school's attendance policy will be the subject of regular review

Appendix 1:

Strategies for improving the attendance of Traveller children.

Schools

- Show high expectations of attendance with regard to pupils who are not travelling;
- Respond promptly to absences through immediate telephone or other enquiries;
- Refer any continuing or repeated absence to the LAAO;
- Check whether absences are authorised;
- Monitor absences;
- Set up pastoral systems to deal effectively with vulnerable children, bullying and racism;
- Avoid exclusions;
- Establish peer support/ befriending/ mentoring schemes;
- Create an inclusive culture which promotes equality and recognises cultural diversity and difference;
- Develop strategies to support pupils with literacy or learning difficulties;
- Provide an appropriate curriculum and personal learning plans;
- Support educational continuity while children are travelling;
- Provide whole staff inset on the particular needs of Traveller pupils;
- Give additional support if needed on entry to school;
- Ensure adequate support at transfer between Key Stages, particularly primary to secondary, and Key Stage 3 to 4;

Improving parental involvement

- Increase contact with families, including home visits, to develop trust and confidence and share information;
- Take account of parents' literacy levels and possible lack of school experience;
- Provide opportunities for mothers, fathers and other relatives to visit the school;
- Encourage the uptake by parents of pre-school and family education opportunities;
- Ensure that parents understand their legal duty to ensure that children receive efficient full-time education.

County Council support

- LAAOs will continue to work closely with the school for Traveller Education, schools and families;
- The County Council Team for Traveller Education will work with families of children not on roll and liaise with LAAOs and other County Council support services to improve access;
- The County Council will, if appropriate, prosecute Traveller parents who neglect their legal duty;
- The County Council will work to ensure that admissions and transport policies provide equal access for Traveller pupils.

Supporting the Attendance of Children who are Looked After & in Care (LAC)

Introduction

Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to securing the best possible educational outcomes for looked after children. It believes that regular, punctual, uninterrupted attendance at school is vital to help ensure that looked after children are able to make the most of the educational opportunities which are available to them.

This policy is intended to identify particular roles and responsibilities for schools, carers and the social care and ESLAC teams.

The policy is intended to supplement other County Council policy and guidance in relation to school attendance.

Responsibilities of Schools

All Cambridgeshire schools are asked to appoint a designated teacher for looked after children. This designated teacher will be responsible for ensuring that practice within his/her school enables any looked after child registered at that school to attend regularly and achieve high educational standards.

If a looked after child fails to attend school and no notification or explanation is received from the child's carer within the first hour of the day of his/her non-attendance the school should attempt to contact the carer immediately. (If contact cannot be made with the carer the ESLAC team should be notified.)

Schools should not authorise any absence of a looked after child unless they receive a satisfactory explanation from the child's carer.

Schools should be alert to any emerging pattern of non-attendance by a looked after child and should refer this to the child's carer and the ESLAC team without delay.

If a looked after child is dual registered and is receiving part or the whole of his/her education off-site the school should ensure that it regularly monitors this attendance and records and reports it accurately. The school should

liaise with the other institution/provider where the looked after child is accessing his/her education on a weekly basis.

Responsibilities of Carers

Carers should ensure that all children in their care attend school regularly and punctually and that children only miss school for unavoidable reasons such as illness.

Carers should endeavour to arrange appointments for looked after children out-of-school hours.

Carers should be alert to any sign that a looked after child is reluctant to attend school and to any events and occurrences which may subsequently impact upon a child's regular school attendance.

Should a looked after child fail to attend school his/her carer should immediately notify the school on the first morning of any absence and offer an explanation for the child's absence (together with an anticipated return date).

Carers should not arrange holidays which involve taking the children for whom they care out of school during term-time.

Responsibilities of Social Workers

Social Workers should ensure that, wherever possible, care related meetings are arranged outside school hours.

Social Workers should ensure that carers are meeting their responsibilities as outlined above.

Responsibilities of the ESLAC Team

The Head of Virtual School for Looked After Children, together with the ESLAC team, will closely monitor and record the attendance of all Cambridgeshire looked after children. This is done by using a company called Welfare Call which is contracted to telephone the Education Provider of all Cambridgeshire's looked after children and report the attendance of each looked after child to the Head of Virtual School on a daily basis. If the school has not been provided with a reason for an absence, a call will be made to the carer asking for an explanation of the absence. This data is then held in the Virtual School management information system and provides ESLAC staff with the necessary data to inform any subsequent interventions.

The ESLAC team will, when necessary, liaise with the Local Authority Attendance Officer attached to the child's school.

Appendix 2

The Registration System

The School will use an electronic register system for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

PUPIL ABSENCE REQUEST FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Absence during term-time as a result of holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning; disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in schools. Cambridgeshire schools and the County Council aim to minimize the amount of time lost to term-time holidays through a policy which actively discourages parents from arranging family holidays during term time and supports schools to authorise absence for such holidays only in **exceptional** circumstances. There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 (including weekends and school holidays) available for use for holidays.

Parents are reminded that they **do not** have any entitlement to term-time leave for their children. Schools will not agree to authorise leave for holidays or extended visits overseas during term-time unless there are **exceptional circumstances** which warrant this. Permission will not be given if it is applied for after the holiday or visit has taken place. When the **exceptional** circumstances are met it can only be for a **single absence** in any one school year, up to a maximum of 10 school days.

Guidelines.

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1st September 2013) to prohibit the Head Teacher of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Head Teacher considers that there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application. **The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they will be unauthorised and will lead to the issuing of a penalty notice (fine).**

Exceptional Circumstances are defined as:

- a parent/carer terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;
- the parent is a member of the armed forces on leave from active duty abroad and can only have a family holiday during this period

The following do not meet the above criteria:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.
- Funeral leave for family members other than siblings or parents
- Weddings for family members other than parents – in this instance only the day of the wedding will be authorised

The Local Authority have the discretion to issue a penalty notice without warning where the parent has chosen to take the child on leave during term time without authorization.

Penalty Notices.

Through section 444A and section 444B of the Education Act 1996, it has become possible that certain cases of unauthorized absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. The current Penalty Notice requires each parent of a child (of compulsory school age whose attendance has been unsatisfactory), to pay. This is currently £60.00 (if paid within 21 days) or £120.00 (if paid within 28 days) per child, per parent.

If you do not pay the Penalty Notice, such cases you will be automatically summonsed to appear in Court for an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 and this can result in a criminal conviction recorded against you.

Courts have a wider range of sentencing options, which would include a maximum fine of up to £1,000.

The only statutory defences to the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 are if:

- The child was absent for proven medical reasons
- The LEA failed to provide transport when required to do so
- The absences were due to religious observance
- You had permission from the school or there was an unavoidable cause

PUPIL ABSENCE REQUEST FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from school, and, in law, have to apply for permission in advance. The school may want to discuss this with you further. Please complete this form and send to the Head Teacher. You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered by the school.

Any absence that has not been agreed in advance by the Head Teacher will be marked as 'unauthorised absence' and may result in involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Officer or possible legal proceedings in the form of a Penalty Notice being issued (see overleaf).

I request that _____ (Name of Child) _____ (Year Group & Class)

be granted leave of absence from _____ (Name of School)

from _____ to _____ inclusive (Dates)

I acknowledge that there are no exceptional circumstances for this absence and this will be an unauthorised absence and I/We **will** be liable to a Penalty Notice Fine from the Local Authority

(Please Tick)

I believe the exceptional reason why the absence needs to be taken in term time is:

(you may wish to discuss this with the school first).

I have children at another school: Bottisham Village College / Soham Village College / Other

Signature of Parent/Carer _____ Date _____

Name of Parent/Carer *(please print)* _____

Office Use Only

Authorised Unauthorised

THIS SECTION TO BE RETURNED TO PARENTS/CARERS

Thank you for your request made for the pupil(s) below to be absent from school under exceptional circumstances. A decision on this absence is shown below:

Pupils Name: _____

Year/Class: _____

Absence Unauthorised

Absence Authorised from _____ to _____

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below an acceptable level.

Signed: _____ (Head Teacher)

Date: _____

Appendix 4

Many parents ask: "Missing a few days a year isn't really a problem is it?"

Often parents comment that a few days absence makes very little difference. We all know that pupils can catch up from a few days missed through unavoidable circumstances or illness. We are also aware that a child may be sick one year and not the next. However when we look back at attendance levels we often find that absence rates are repeated year after year.

Over time this can build up to significant amounts of time away from school. The question is which days, weeks, terms or years would you like your child to miss?

	<u>Minimum</u> expectation	Persistent Absentee	
School days Missed in	95% attendance = 180 days	90% attendance = 171 days	85% attendance = 162 days
	5% Absence = 10 days	10% Absence = 19 days	15% absence = 28 days
1 Year	10 days	19 days (4 weeks of school)	28 days (½ term of lessons)

Key Stage 1 (Rec – Yr2)	28 days	57 days	84 days
Key Stage 2 (Yr3 – Yr6)	38 days	76 days	112 days
Primary School (Rec – Yr6)	66 days (or 13 weeks)	133 days	196 days over 1 year

12 years to end of secondary school(R – Yr11)	114 days (or 23 weeks)	228 days or over 1 school year	336 days or over 1.5 years of school.
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