



26th January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

School Attendance

As you have seen or will see in the very near future the Government has launched a new school attendance campaign to improve the attendance rates of pupils which have fallen since the COVID pandemic. We are fortunate at Burwell that our children attend school at rates that are better than both the national and local figures.

In 2021/22 the rate of attendance was in the highest 1% of schools nationally. In 2022/23 this had fallen slightly to the top 16% (still a fantastic achievement). This is only possible because of the curriculum we provide and the enjoyment that children derive from it and because of your support as parents. This is something of which we as a school we should be immensely proud of.

This year attendance has not been as strong. We know that early in the year many children were suffering from significant respiratory illnesses and then also suffered with sickness. Neither of these can be avoided and we understand that these will prevent children from attending school. Hopefully, these illnesses will not reoccur now we are looking towards Spring. As a school we want to give you as much information as necessary to make informed decisions about illnesses and whether your child needs to be absent from school. The NHS have produced the following guidelines ([is my child too ill for school?](#)) to support your decision making.

In addition to the guidance above we send out regular information regarding the rate of attendance for your child when the figure drops below 96%. To put this into context, a child who attends 95% of the time which sounds like a good figure will have lost two weeks of their education by the end of the year. Below is a table which demonstrates just how much learning time can be lost at various percentages of absence.

Percentage	Number of days
95%	10 days
90%	19 days
85%	29 days

Inevitably, children who miss school will miss learning and for some they will not be able to catch this learning up. For most children, teachers and parents working together can fill minor gaps in learning caused by illness but when a child is missing school regularly it becomes harder and harder to ensure that they have learnt all the content necessary in that year group and this hinders their progress in future years. The link between attendance and attainment is clear:

- In 2018/19, just 40% of persistently absent (PA) children in KS2 achieved expected KS2 standards, compared with 84% of pupils who were regular attenders.
- And 36% of PA children in KS4 got 9 to 4 in their English and maths GCSEs, also compared with 84% of regular attenders.

SSAttendance improvements can ensure that pupils do achieve even if they have missed time previously.

- More than half (54%) of pupils who were PA in Year 10 and then rarely absent in Year 11, passed at least 5 GCSEs, compared to 36% of pupils who were persistently absent in both years.

School attendance not only affects attainment but it can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing. Feeling part of something bigger than yourself helps children to self-regulate, understand emotion and wellbeing and allows them to understand how the world around them works.

If there are medical issues of which we are unaware or things happening in school or at home that are having an impact on your child attending school, please talk to your child's class teacher. We will look for as many ways to support as possible. We have the wellbeing team on site who can provide some structured support and we have other agencies from whom we can request support.

Thank you for your ongoing support and ensuring that your child is in school regularly.

Regards,



Antony Kern
Headteacher