



**Buxton Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

**November 2023**

<b>Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-</b>	<b>Buxton Primary School</b>
<b>On:-</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b>
<b>Chair of Governors:-</b>	<b>Kathryn Corder</b>
<b>Last updated:-</b>	<b>September 2023</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>September 2024</b>

## **Aims**

Buxton Primary School is committed to providing learning of the highest quality in a caring and supportive environment that recognises personal growth and development.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets.

We are committed to; 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 and building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

## **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](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy contains the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

**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 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
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- 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

**Senior office staff are responsible for:**

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to parents, governors and the headteacher and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**Class teachers are responsible for:**

Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office in a timely manner.

**Office staff are responsible for:**

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system.
- Making calls to parents/carers about absence when their child is not at school and no notification has been received as to their whereabouts.
- Passing on information / telephone calls from parents/carers to SLT in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

**Promoting attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The Home/School agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

Parents / carers are kept informed of their child's absence. This is through half termly attendance reports which are sent home after each half term break. The school also issues termly attendance and education bulletins in January and April each year. Every child also receives an end of year report which details each child's attendance across the year.

## **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education and as offered via the management and information system (Pupil Asset).

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

Parents / carers may be issued with a penalty notice for any unauthorised absence, including unauthorised term-time holidays. The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised (this is not an exhaustive list, but provides examples of what will be unauthorised):

- Birthdays
- Shopping
- Day trips
- Looking after brothers or sisters or ill relatives (also absence of siblings if one child is ill)
- Caring for a disabled parent
- Oversleeping
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical / Dental appointments of more than half a day without good reasons
- Having their hair cut
- Special treat
- Norfolk Show
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- Persistent non specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Term-time holiday

Examples of authorised absences are (this is not an exhaustive list, but provides examples of what could be authorised. Each authorised absence is reviewed on an individual basis:

- Illness
- Medical appointments
- Religious observance
- Other exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Parent's wedding
- Compulsory non-medical appointments
- Fixed term absence is recommended by a medical professional
- The death / terminal illness / funeral of a very close family member, where appropriate

## **Legal Interventions**

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

As part of the Pupil Registration Regulations from the Department for Education, the Headteacher does NOT have the ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Under the Local Authority (LA) Legal Interventions Fixed Penalty Notices guidance, the Headteacher is obliged to inform the LA of any pupils with 9 or more unauthorised absences (4.5 days) in any 6 week period. These do not have to be consecutive. As per the LA Legal Interventions guidance:

To ensure consistent delivery of penalty notices, the following criteria will apply:

- at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil within 6 school weeks

The issuing of a penalty notice is considered appropriate:

- when the pupil has been absent for the purposes of a holiday during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- when the pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and the session has been recorded with a 'U'
- when the pupil has accrued unauthorised absence from school and following consultation with the Local Authority Attendance Service it has been agreed that the issuing of a penalty notice is an appropriate early intervention tool

Parents can potentially be fined if their child falls within this category. Fines will be administered by the Courts. Fines will be £60 per child per parent. The school is not involved in the fines process neither does it benefit from the fines process.

## **Registers and Lateness**

Registration occurs at 8:30am and 1pm. The register in the morning is open to 9am, in the afternoon to 1:15pm.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close.

### **First Day Absence**

Parents are expected to contact school before the start of the school day if their child is going to be absent. A specific absence line is available for parents to leave a voice message with their child's name, class and reason for absence. The messages are listened to by 9am and recorded on the pupil absence spreadsheet.

The class teacher is informed of the child's absence so that the correct mark can be made on the register. If the class teacher recognises a child is absent, they record it as a 'blank' on the register and send it to the office for a telephone call to be made. The school office will phone parents if any child fails to arrive by 9.15am.

### **Third Day Absence**

The school will try all known contacts for a child if we are not aware of why a child is absent from school. This includes contacts other than just parents. We will also email / send a text message if we are unable to reach anyone by phone. If we are unable to make contact, then we will also contact any known friends / associates of the family i.e. we will contact another parent we know is friends with the family. Two members of staff (for safety) will visit the family home if we are still unable to make contact to ascertain why the child is absent. The home visit could also be undertaken by the Parent Support Advisor (Carol Flatters based at Aylsham High School) if we felt this was appropriate and/or had previous involvement with the family.

If no contact has been made after three days, the school will send a standard letter to the home address asking for an immediate explanation for their child's absence. We will also contact both the attendance and children missing education services at Norfolk County Council for further advice.

### **Continuing Absence**

A further letter is sent if the absence continues, and school will contact both the attendance and children missing education services at Norfolk County Council for further advice.

### **Ten Day's Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Staff for the local area. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

### **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence must be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

### **Frequent Absence**

Within the school, class teachers are requested to be aware of and bring attention to the head teacher of any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible with parents. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Attendance Entitlement Officer (AEO).

### **Persistent Absence [PA]**

All parents of pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% will be contacted and monitored. If attendance does not improve parents may be subject to an action plan to support their child's return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Headteacher. The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance, such as the AEO and the parent support advisor.

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

### Attendance Awards

The school does not intend to use attendance awards. This is in keeping with the school ethos of high expectations, aspirations and inclusivity.

### The registration system

The following national codes available on Pupil Asset 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
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized 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) School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence.	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 required to be in school)	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

### Record preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be printed out weekly and preserved as electronic back-ups.

### Register Security

Attendance marking sheets are stored in the school office after the close of each registration period.

**Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work. Targets will relate to national averages.

**Overall Absence**

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
England Primaries	4.0%	Autumn term 2019 4.3%	Autumn term 2020 3.7%	Autumn term 2021 5.7%	10.7%
Buxton	4.6%	Autumn term 2019 2.83%	Autumn term 2020 2.03%	Autumn term 2021 6.12%	6.25%

*Any pupil with attendance below 90% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences.*



## **Appendices**

### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
  - [b] To any special needs he may have.
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

#### **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations (2006) Regulations 2013

#### **Attendance Targets**

The legal requirements are found in: The Education (School Attendance Targets)(England) Regulations 2007

#### **Guidance documents on attendance.**

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.