



## BUSBRIDGE CE (Aided) JUNIOR SCHOOL

# Attendance Policy



**This policy was updated by the Governing Body in the Autumn term 2023  
It is reviewed annually by the School Leadership Team and school's Inclusion Officer**

*(version 20.10.2023)*

### INTRODUCTION

The school staff and governors firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

### EXPECTATIONS

#### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school regularly, punctually and prepared appropriately for the day;
- Discuss with their class teacher or phase leader, any problems that may deter them from attending school.

#### **We expect that all parents or carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:**

- Provide contact details for parents/carers and additional emergency contacts for their child
- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that the children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the children is unable to attend school;
- Contact the school on the first day of a child's absence explaining the reason for absence;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

#### **We expect that school staff will:**

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, in the morning and afternoon;
- Monitor every pupil's attendance. The school office will issue a fortnightly attendance report to the Head teacher, outlining overall attendance numbers and the attendance of any children in the Persistently Absent category (attendance is below 90%);
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil is absent where no message has been received (by 10am);

- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence;
- Encourage good attendance;
- Make initial enquiries of parents or carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service (formerly known as the Education Welfare Service);

## **ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE**

Busbridge CE Junior School encourages regular attendance in the following ways by;

- Providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- Responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- Monitoring attendance
- Publishing and displaying attendance statistics;
- Celebrating good and improved attendance;

## **RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE**

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- If no note or telephone call is received from the parent or carer the school will make every effort to contact them by 10am to ascertain the reason for absence from school.
- If the school is unable to contact the parent /carer the school will continue to try. In the meantime, the school will also contact alternative contacts held for the pupils in order to establish the pupil's whereabouts. Should there be pre-existing concerns about a child's welfare, or in the case that no contact can be made to establish why a child is absent from school, the police or other linked professionals may be called to support the school.
- The school will continue to try to contact the parent or carer and invite them into school to discuss their concerns.
- The school will tell parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service;
- Monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action or court prosecution.

## **CHANGING SCHOOLS**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Busbridge CE Junior School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school;
- The new home address, if relevant

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

## **ILLNESS**

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on each and every day of absence by 9.15am either in person or by telephone. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that must be in school time. An Absence Request Form for these absences should be completed in advance wherever possible.

## **PUPIL'S LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- Wherever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside school time;
- Parents are requested to advise the school, by completing the Absence Request Form, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time;
- Pupils must come to the office to be signed out by their parent/carer on leaving the school and to be signed back in on their return;
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents must report to the school office to sign the pupil out;
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the police and register the pupil as a missing person.

## **DENTAL AND MEDICAL TREATMENTS**

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school should be notified of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

## **LATENESS**

Please note that, if pupils arrive after the school start time they will be recorded as late. School registers are closed at 9.15am (and pupils arriving after this time will be recorded 'as late after close of register' which counts as an unauthorised absence for that session. The pupil's name will be recorded in line with school procedures in case of emergency procedures/fire drills etc.

## **REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an application for leave of absence form should be obtained from the school office, completed and submitted to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may consult with the Chair of Governors and other local schools (in cases where leave has also been requested for siblings) and will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

## **FAMILY HOLIDAYS**

The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published well in advance and are available from the school office and on the school website. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates. Family holidays are not deemed exceptional circumstances. In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

## **SETTING SCHOOL WORK TO COMPLETE DURING A FAMILY HOLIDAY**

The school's policy is to not provide work for a child to complete during a family holiday.

Until teachers finish the teaching and marking for any particular week, the following week's learning and homework are not fully available. We have unit plans that we follow for teaching class work, but this is often adapted as we progress through a learning journey with the children. Homework is often planned in response to children's classwork and therefore not produced very far in advance. As a result work / homework is not necessarily ready for issue in the week before.

However we do encourage children to read, and practice their multiplication tables whilst they are away.

If a child is away for a longer period of time (i.e. more than two weeks) the school will discuss with the parents how to continue the learning during the absence. This might take the form of commercial maths workbooks, keeping a diary, etc.

## **PENALTY NOTICES**

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

## **CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED**

The Education Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or the Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

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## Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. .

Please complete and submit this form as early as possible and **at least 2 weeks** before the beginning of the requested absence if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request. A copy will then be sent to you to indicate whether or not this request for leave of absence has been authorised

### Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct . The Penalty Notice is £60 per child per parent/carer if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court. The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

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|--|--|---|
| <b>Name of child:</b>  |  | <b>Class:</b>                                 |
| I am applying for leave of absence for my child for .....                          |  |   |
| From (dates):  |  | to (dates) :                                  |
| Number of school days:   |  |   |
| The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:                        |  |   |
| Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO          |  |   |
| If YES, please give dates and details:   |  |   |
| I also have children at (school name):   |  |   |
| Signed:  |  | (Parent/Carer) Date:                          |
| <b>To be completed by the Headteacher:</b>   |  |   |
| Number of absent sessions to date in current academic year                         |  |   |
| Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is: |  |   |
| Approved   |  | The absence will be recorded as authorised.   |
| Not approved   |  | The absence will be recorded as unauthorised. |
| Explanatory notes:   |  |   |
| Signed:  |  | Date:   |
| (Headteacher)  |  |   |

(vers 02.10.19)