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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Busbridge Infant School

<b>Policy Lead:</b>	<b>Darren Heatley, Headteacher</b>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Children &amp; Learning Committee</b>
<b>Date from:</b>	<b>Autumn 2021</b>
<b>Review Cycle:</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>Autumn 2022</b>

It is our task as teachers at Busbridge Infant School to promote and support our children's learning and enable each one of them to achieve their full potential.

We endeavour to provide a school day that excites challenges and motivates each child, and allows them to develop as independent learners. Our organisation of their learning promotes enjoyment, perseverance and self-discipline. We encourage the children to achieve personal excellence in all aspects of work and behaviour.

The school staff, alongside the Local Authority (LA), firmly believes 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;
- arrive at school punctually;
- come to school appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss anything at school which makes them unhappy.

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

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- provide the school with up-to-date emergency contact numbers for more than one person;
- avoid taking holidays in term time.

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

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every pupil's attendance;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- contact parents as soon as possible when prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising absence
- encourage good attendance;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- provide a safe learning environment;
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- meet with the school's Inclusion Officer regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service;

- meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention - The Rights Of The Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in decisions that relate to them;
- ensure information on the admission and attendance registers are up-to-date and accurate.

### **Leave of Absence**

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays to be taken in term time.

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The Leave of Absence Request Form can be obtained from the school office.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

The Head Teacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Should absence be taken without the Head Teacher's authorisation, the Head Teacher may request the issue of a Penalty Notice or decide to refer the matter to the Inclusion Service.

### **Dental and Medical Appointments**

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/ carers are encouraged, wherever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during the school day are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, 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.

### **Responding To Non-Attendance**

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

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9:30, the school will endeavour to contact them that day.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer using the additional emergency contact details on file if necessary. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or 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.
- In the instance of persistent non-attendance, (PA), the school will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the Inclusion Service when a formal referral may be made. Absence at this level has a significant negative impact on any child's education

and these pupils are tracked and monitored carefully, including levels of attainment. PA pupils and their parents are offered support through the HSLW (Home School Link Worker)

- if a child has persistent absence and meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice to be issued; or has been taken out of school without the school's permission for 5 or more days; the school will liaise with the Inclusion Service/ Local Authority to decide whether a Penalty Notice should be issued;
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution

### **Responding to lateness**

When a pupil is late for school they should enter the building via the front so that they can be recorded as being present. Registers open at 9.00am and are taken promptly. Children will be recorded as being late if they arrive after 9.00am but before 9.30am, when the registers close. Any child arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as late after close of register (U coded) and this denotes an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Service .

### **Changing schools**

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform 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 it is known.

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.

### **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 consider prosecuting the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

## **Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued**

**The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher 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 may 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 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.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

The following information about Penalty Notices is published termly in the school Newsletter:

Please be aware that if parents/carers take their child out of school without authorisation for 5 or more days, they will be liable to receive penalty notices. Currently, the amount payable under a penalty notice is £60.00 payable within 21 days, rising to £120.00 if paid within 21- 28 days. If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Please note that Penalty Notices are issued per parent/carer per child, so a family with 2 parents/carers and 2 children will receive 4 penalty notices

## **School Closure**

If the school is prevented from opening/forced to close due to an unavoidable event, all efforts will be made to deliver appropriate alternative provision.

In the event of a partial (year group bubble) or full closure at Busbridge Infant School due to coronavirus (COVID-19), the school has prepared a contingency plan for remote learning. The plan can be downloaded from the school website here [http://www.busbridge-infant.surrey.sch.uk/website/home\\_learning/462721](http://www.busbridge-infant.surrey.sch.uk/website/home_learning/462721) in the Home Learning section.