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# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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## **1. Introduction and aims of attendance framework:**

1.1 Every minute of learning time at Bure Park Primary School is precious for Children and staff. At all times, Children should be 'ready to learn' and enthusiastic about attending school every day.

1.2 We have very high expectations for pupils' (and staff's) attendance and punctuality; 100% attendance and punctuality are expected from everyone in the School community. Children need to attend school in order to benefit from the education offered at Bure Park Primary School.

1.3 We recognise that this presents a real challenge for some Children, and we therefore set out in this Policy our approaches to monitor and encourage Children to meet our high expectations, and to empower them to become independent and responsible young people.

1.4 Absence from school whether authorised (valid reason) or unauthorised (no valid reason) affects an individual's ability to have positive peer and adult relationships and develop social skills. The habits of regular and punctual attendance are important in their own right: they enable individuals to participate in social organisations and shared arrangements, to take on commitments, and to contribute at work as well as at school. These habits do not develop spontaneously: they need to be requested, encouraged, shaped and rewarded.

1.5 Truancy is another way of describing unauthorised absence from school. Truants are more likely to do poorly at school, socially and academically. Truants are also more likely to be involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour, and it is harder for them to find and keep work. For these reasons Bure Park Primary School is committed to making explicit the need for excellent attendance and punctuality and will take swift action to prevent long-term truancy developing.

1.6 Having an Attendance Policy and system in place enables us to be clear with parents/carers about the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality. It also enables us to challenge Children and parents/carers who may condone absence from the School for trivial reasons. The reasons our parents/carers give for absence are systematically explored and the effect on their child's achievement recorded. In this way we are building an evidence base that improves our knowledge and understanding about which individuals and groups of children are vulnerable and enable us to take positive swift interventionist action.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- 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
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

2.1 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2.2 It is Oxfordshire County Council's responsibility in law to enforce the regular attendance of registered Children of statutory school age. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) must serve attendance orders on parents and may institute proceedings against parents of a child who are in breach of a school attendance order or who are failing to secure the regular attendance of their child at school, having first considered whether to apply for an Educational Supervision Order with respect to the child (Sections 437, 443 and 444 of the Education Act 1996).

2.3 Bure Park Primary School fulfils its legal duty to maintain Admissions and Attendance Registers and to record pupil attendance or absence from school.

2.4 Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child/ children receive a full-time education and that Children registered at a school attend regularly and punctually.

2.5 This Policy adheres to the non-statutory DfE guidance on School Attendance May 2022

## 3 Links to other policies and practice

3.1 The Attendance and Punctuality Policy should be read in conjunction with the following areas of School policy:

- Safeguarding and safer recruitment (including Child Protection) Policy
- Exclusions Policy

## 4 Principles

4.1 The following framework underpins the approach to Attendance and Punctuality:

- Clear, open and transparent lines of communication between parents/carers and the School at all times
- Timely, pre-emptive action where necessary
- Consistency in support and challenge
- We go beyond our legal requirements to actively encourage excellent attendance and punctuality.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

### **5.1 The governing board**

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 link governor for attendance is Sarah Dawe

### **5.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors with support from the attendance lead.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Holding the designated attendance lead to account for the implementation of this policy

### **5.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance and punctuality across the school
- Working with the office staff to follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence promptly through first day calling
- Monitor attendance patterns across year groups and produce data for discussion with class teachers, year leaders and SLT.
- Investigate the underlying cause of any children with poor attendance.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families and offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues as well as taking calls from parents regarding their child's absence, checking the validity of the reason.
- Refer Children to the Education Welfare Officer (Only applicable if child is above statutory age) when:
  - there has been no parental response to communications from the School regarding absence
  - attendance continues to be unsatisfactory following contact with

- parents/carers
  - there is a concern about unauthorised absence
  - a pupil's attendance has fallen below 90% for which there is insufficient medical grounds
- Monitor the accuracy of registers and use of absence codes
- Meet with the Home school link team for regular updates.
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rory Gratwohl and can be contacted via the school office on 01869 354059 or email office@bureparkprimary.org

#### **5.4 All Staff**

- Act as role models at all times, in modelling perfect attendance and punctuality
- Accurately take registers according to this policy 6
- Pro-actively identify potential concerns with attendance and punctuality, and refer to line manager or attendance officer
- Ensure absence notes are received by parents/carers and passed on to the Attendance Officer / Front Office.

#### **5.5 Office staff**

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate staff member in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Record details from parent emails or evidence of medical letters to go on student files
- Inform the LA of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admissions register for the reasons outlined in Section 6 below

#### **5.6 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time and support them in meeting or getting as close to a target of 100%
- Telephone the school to report their child's absence before 8:35am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return. This will be noted on Integris. Notification of absences is a legal requirement.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Limit their child's absences to cases of genuine illness
- Book holidays outside of term time. No pupil will be permitted to take a holiday during term time

## 5.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time to meet or get as close to a target of 100%
- Arrive to school on time, 8:35 for KS1 and KS2.
- Arrive to school on time, 8:40 for Reception.
- Arrive to school on time, 8:50 for Nursery.

## 6. Implementation

### 6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent - See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment
- See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (For pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for the entirety of the pupil's attendance at Bure Park and 3 years after the date on which they leave.

### 6.2 Dropping off and picking up procedures

Start of the school day:

Timings:	Year 1 - Year 6	Reception	Nursery
8:30	Gates Open	Gates Open	Gates Open
8:35	Doors open		
8:40	Gates Close Any child must enter through the school office to be	Doors open	

	registered. Register closes (children are considered late)		
8:45		Register closes (children are considered late)	
8:50			Doors Open
9:00	Children after this time considered Unauthorised absence unless discussed with the headteacher.	Children after this time considered Unauthorised absence unless discussed with the headteacher.	Register Opens
9:10			Register closes (children are considered late)
9:15			Children after this time considered Unauthorised absence unless discussed with the headteacher.

End of the School Day:

Timings:	Year 1 - Year 6	Reception	Nursery
12:15			AM: End of the school Day: children handed over to parents at the front office.
3:05		End of the school Day: children handed over to parents from the door of the classroom.	PM: End of the school Day: children handed over to parents from the door of the classroom.
3:15	End of the school Day: children handed over to		



	parents from the door of the classroom.		
3:55	End of after school clubs, adults collect children from classroom of club.		

Class Adults will stay with the children until 3.20 pm. After this time, all children are taken to the main office where parents will be called and their child's name entered in to the 'Late Collection Book'. If a child is repeatedly picked up late, a letter will be sent to the parents/carers requesting a meeting with the Senior Leadership Team.

### 6.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:35 or as soon as practically possible by calling the office staff (see also section 7).

Parents and carers should call every day of their child's absence. The use of emails to the school office is not sufficient.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### 6.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment with evidence of the appointment.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 7 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### 6.5 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code L

- After the register has closed will be marked using the appropriate code  
U

Parents will be called to discuss any punctuality issues and support offered to parents. This may take the form of a team of class parents supporting to bring children to school or staff in teams of 2 collecting the child/ren.

The school understands the importance of being prompt in learning as even a small proportion of time missed can lead to disruption and missed opportunities to recall knowledge. The school is proactive with working with families to support coming to school. However, if a child is persistently late, this will lead to a letter being sent to the family along with a conversation with senior staff to support and understand the barriers for children and/ or families.

## 6.6 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a door knock and contact LCSS for further advice if no contact can be made.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If a child is not seen without sufficient reason for more than 3 days then a door knock by members of the school staff will be completed. If the absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer from the local authority and may contact LCSS for further advice.

## 6.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at parents' evenings in November and March and in written form in July. Where absence is close to 90% a letter will be sent to parents to inform them of their child's absence. They will be invited to a meeting to offer support to the family.

Being in school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. [Evidence](#) shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results...The data also shows that in 2019, [primary school](#) children in Key Stage 2 who didn't achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths missed on average four more days per school year than those whose performance exceeded the expected standard. ([DfE, 2023](#)).

## 7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 7.1 Approval for term-time absence

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. They review each request for absence by a case by case basis considering the child and the context of the absence before approving or considering the absence as unauthorised.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least a week before the absence. Any absence request should be submitted in writing to the headteacher. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The school does not have to accept the parents/carers offered explanation as a valid cause for absence. There are certain circumstances outlined in the DfE guidelines that the school categorises as authorised absence. The guidelines are based on the needs of the community and the reasons parents/carers may wish their children to take leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 6.2 and 6.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's and their parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### 7.2 Unauthorised leave of absence

The Head teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

'Exceptional circumstances' may include, for example, an emergency hospital visit, death of a close family member, funeral of a close family member, wedding of a close family member, leave of absence for service children after a parental deployment, or cancer treatment of a parent. However, the head teacher is able to see each issue of attendance on a case-by-case basis and will discuss and consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

A close family member may be defined as a parent/stepparent, grandparent or sibling. 'Sibling' means:

- full brother or sister

- half-brother or half-sister
- stepbrother or stepsister
- adopted or long-term fostered brother or sister; living at the same address.

Again, this is considered by the headteacher and each request is considered on a request by request basis.

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence for a holiday during term time unless, having considered the case individually, they conclude that there are exceptional circumstances.

### **7.3 Legal sanctions**

For extreme cases of low attendance, the school or local authority hold the right to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The school will only choose to follow these sanctions after significant notification, discussions with senior staff and barriers to education are considered. The school does not make these decisions lightly.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher or a person with delegated responsibility, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **7.4 Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

As a consequence of the pandemic, after the 20-21 school year, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) (This code is not counted as an absence in the school census) This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care<sup>12</sup> or
- any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Schools should also continue to use code X to record when a pupil not of compulsory

school age is not expected to attend as detailed below.

## **8. Strategies for promoting attendance**

The Head teacher will hold a special assembly where they will give out stickers for pupils with 96% attendance. Each long term will be a new start.

8.1 In order to have 100% attendance Children must be in school all day, every day. Children who miss part of the school day for appointments e.g. medical, dental, speech & language would not be able to achieve 100%. We strongly encourage parents to make appointments outside of the school day.

8.2 If a child comes to school but is then sent home ill, this would not affect attendance as the onus is on the school staff recommending that the child be sent home for their own wellbeing.

8.3 The attendance of each class is reported on the board in the office of the school along with in the parent newsletter.

8.4 All Children and parents/carers receive feedback and percentage scores about their attendance record as part of the reporting system every half term.

8.5 Parents/carers are encouraged to avoid any absence from the school and they are made aware that they should not arrange holidays or routine medical check-ups during term time.

8.6 Systems for concerns about attendance and punctuality are shown in the Appendices.

8.7 Attendance and punctuality is tracked and analysed each half-term according to:

- Overall attendance figures for the School
- Attendance by gender/ Pupil Premium Funded (PPF)/ English as an additional language (EAL)/ special educational needs and disability (SEND) or a child with a Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Attendance by Key Stage/year
- Attendance by term/week/day

8.8 Interventions for specific groups and individuals are implemented according to need, and reviewed regularly.

## **9. Attendance monitoring**

The Attendance Officer, Pupil Premium Lead and SENDCo will meet on a monthly basis to analyse data and highlight any patterns or concerns. This information will be then shared with SLT and governors if required.

### **9.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data monthly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The

underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## **9.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## **9.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## **9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is defined as where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

As part of our safeguarding duty of care, all staff are expected to highlight any concerns regarding attendance and raise them in a timely fashion with the school attendance officer. CPOMS is to be used to raise concerns if a child has not been seen for 48 hours.

## **10 Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, or as a minimum, each September by the SLT attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **11 Children Missing Education**

11.1 The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

11.2 The school will therefore share information effectively with the local authority to ensure all children are safe and receiving a suitable education. Any pupils considered to be 'children missing education' will be referred to the Local Authority.

11.3 When a pupil leaves outside of the standard transition point, the school will ensure it notifies the Local Authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations. (Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

11.4 The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a pupil jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the pupil has left outside of the standard transition point. This will involve contacting all emergency contacts and may involve a home visit from the school if the whereabouts of the child are not confirmed.

11.5 Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil may be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

**/** Present (am) Pupil is present at morning registration \ Present (pm) Pupil is present at afternoon registration  
**L** Late arrival Pupil arrives late before register has closed

**B** Off-site educational activity Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

**D** Dual registered Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

**J** Interview Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

**P** Sporting activity Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

**V** Educational trip or visit Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

**W** Work experience Pupil is on a work experience placement

## Authorised absence

**C** Authorised leave of absence Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

**E** Excluded Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

**H** Authorised holiday Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

**I** Illness School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

**M** Medical/dental appointment Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

**R** Religious observance Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

**S** Study leave

Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence. Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school



## Unauthorised absence

**G** Unauthorised holiday Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

**N** Reason not provided Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

**O** Unauthorised absence School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

**U** Arrival after registration Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

## Other Absences and closures

**X** Not required to be in school Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

**Y** Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

**Z** Pupil not on admission register Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

**#** Planned school closure Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2:  
Attendance and punctuality thresholds

Code	%	Action
Blue	100	Monitored by teacher and school office Termly and annual certificates for outstanding attendance in Assembly
Green	96-99	99% Good attendance 97% Satisfactory attendance 5 or more days absent in a half term – back to school meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. 96% 1 <sup>st</sup> letter sent home from attendance lead.
Amber	90-95	94% Letter 2 sent home including legal information, warning that a further drop will require a meeting in school. 92% Letter 3 sent home Head teacher and Deputy Head Teacher to organise a parent meeting, depending on circumstances a parenting contract to be drawn up. This is reviewed by Head teacher after 6 weeks. Extenuating circumstances investigated to determine suitability of next steps. Referral to Education Welfare Service where appropriate. Fixed Penalty Notice where appropriate.
Red	Below 90	89% (or decline within weeks) – Letter 4 sent home. Head Teacher to organise a joint parent meeting and explain the legal implications of further poor attendance. Process for Penalty Notice is explained. Below 75% - As a last resort, the Head teacher will seek Local Authority prosecution as a final step. This could include Fixed Penalty Notice. Court Action & Referral to Education Welfare Service.