

BURE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



ROLE	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Attendance Officer	Sarah Lewis	S.Lewis	01.10.26
Headteacher	Sarah Moon	S. Moon	01.10.26
Governor	Sarah Dawe	S. Dawe	01.10.26

Next Review	September 2027
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1 : Introduction

Bure Park Primary is a successful school and your child is a valued member of our Bure Park Family. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. This Policy sets out how together we will achieve this, rooted in our values of Teamwork, Kindness & Honesty.

Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children are best safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

Once your child reaches statutory school age, ensuring their regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. (Education Act 1996, S444(1) and S444(1A)).

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(July 2026\)](#)

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide support from the pastoral team to pupils and their parents when their attendance is of concern
- Communicate our attendance figures regularly
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, and how their attendance and punctuality rate is impacting their attainment
- Celebrate and promote good attendance, and the positive impact across our school community

Attendance targets

All schools are given targets to promote and improve attendance. The school reports and publishes its absence figures and attendance policy to parents, alongside sharing attendance data with Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education. We have a lead governor who scrutinises our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils.

The school is set an attendance target based on making a percentage improvement upon last year's attendance figures. This is known as the Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE), and we will keep you updated as to progress towards the figure of **95.5%**. However, **we aim to achieve better than this** and our internal target is **96%** to ensure we capitalise on the proven links between good attendance and excellence in learning outcomes. It is worth noting even a child with 96% attendance has still missed 8 whole days across the year.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. For example, when analysing attendance data, we draw trends based on pupils' characteristics, vulnerabilities, days of the week, subjects missed and repeat illnesses. We then focus our attention on addressing these trends of absence either with individuals, affected groups or as a whole school.

2: Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, the school may request reasonable supporting information.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school late after the register has closed and are therefore given an unauthorised absence mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed. This will only be authorised for exceptional circumstances in compliance with legislation and at the discretion of the school. See 'Exceptional Leave' section for more details

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please communicate this with us at the earliest opportunity. Covering up their absence or giving in to pressure to excuse them from attending gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with our school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Exceptional Leave

Other than the sorts of absences which would ordinarily be authorised (see above), any other leave of absence will only be granted during term time if there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Head Teacher looks at 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, religion and relevant context behind the request.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help their child and us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and absence for this reason may result in Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) issuing a Penalty Notice (see section below).

- It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment
- All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising requests for holidays
- The Head Teacher or attendance officer will contact every family applying for Exceptional Leave to explore the reasons for absence whilst stressing the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
- OCC guidance is that Exceptional Leave is likely to be refused when school is aware of any truancy
- Similarly, OCC guidance is that Exceptional Leave is likely to be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable
- Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process

The Penalty issued and collected by Oxfordshire County Council is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £160 if paid between day 21 and day 28. This amount is prescribed by the Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007 (and subsequent amendment (2024)). Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the prescribed period may result in prosecution for the underlying offence of failure to secure regular school attendance.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80. (The three-year period begins from the date of the first penalty notice issued on or after 19 August 2024).

Please note: Penalty Notices are issued per parent/per child, e.g. two parents who take two children for a term time holiday of 5 days (or 10 half days) or more in a ten-week period may therefore face a minimum fine of £320.

3: Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must contact us directly, ideally by phone, as soon as possible on the first day of absence with the reason for the non-attendance. Alternatively, you can call into school and report to the Office, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you. In accordance with our school values, please **be honest about the reason for absence** including if you are on holiday.

If your child is absent we:

- will telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- may take necessary steps to ensure your child is safe, which could include a welfare check through additional phone calls, or a video call or a home visit
- will gain the voice of the child to ensure we are taking a child centred approach
- may invite the parent/carer to a meeting in the school to identify the barriers to attendance and ensure support is put in place if it is needed
- may offer a Strengths and Needs form
- may refer the matter to the County Attendance Team
- may inform social services if we are concerned, following the Safeguarding Policy

In order to do this, please ensure we have your current contact numbers, home address(es) and email addresses at all times.

4: Punctuality

Poor punctuality can adversely affect your child. If they miss the start of the day they do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day through their *Class Family Time*. Late arriving pupils can experience disruption to learning, feel embarrassed and this can then encourage further absence or anxiety around school. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of the School Leadership Team and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time

Key timings

Nursery

As we are a school setting, our expectations of Nursery attendance are in line with other year groups, despite pupils here not being of statutory school-age. We believe that good habits of attendance formed here help set children and families in good stead for their journey through our school, and are the catalyst for our youngest pupils to build connections with their peers and staff, and feel safe within consistent and predictable daily routines.

- 0830 Gates open into EYFS
- 0850 Nursery doors open
- 0900 Register opens - If your child arrives to school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (/)
- 0910 Doors, gates and classroom registers close - Children are considered late and will receive a late mark (L) if they have then entered the building via the office
- 0915 Arrival after this time means they will receive a mark (U) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

Reception

- 0830 Gates open into EYFS
- 0840 Reception classroom doors open - If your child arrives to school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (/)
- 0850 Gates, doors & classroom registers close - Children are considered late and will receive a late mark (L) if they have then entered the building via the office
- 0900 Arrival after this time means they will receive a mark (U) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If they are statutory school age, this may mean you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Y1-6

- 0830 Gates are open onto the main site
- 0835 Classroom doors open - If your child arrives to school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (/)
- 0840 Gates and doors close, and then classroom registers close at 0845. Children are considered late and will receive a late mark (L) if they have then entered the building via the office
- 0900 Arrival after this time means they will receive a mark (U) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Afternoon registration

Whilst there is no mandatory time for **pm** registration, the school will seek to take the register directly following the lunchtime period at 1310 in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are Late to return or whom do not return. If your child is present for this registration they will be marked (\)

End of the school day

For EYFS pupils in Nursery, mornings only pupils are handed over to parents via the school office at 1215. Full time Nursery pupils and all pupils in Reception are handed over to parents/carers from their classroom doors at 1505.

Pupils in Y1-6 finish their school day at 1515, and are handed over to parents/carers (with exceptions made for Y6 and Y5 in summer term) from their classroom doors.

Any staff-led extracurricular clubs finish promptly at 1600, with designated collection points for parents which are communicated to you when your child's place in the club is confirmed.

5: Support first pathway

Parents are encouraged to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful, and we pride ourselves on approaching all attendance matters with teamwork, kindness and honesty.

Stage 1

Emerging concern – Class teacher or Attendance officer may **contact family** to find out how the school can help with any barriers to attendance

Stage 2

Targeted support – Attendance officer may work with the pupil and their family to put together an **Action Plan** to support the improvement of attendance

Stage 3

Formal Attendance intervention – School may issue a **Notice to Improve**, and may seek to involve further support from the County Attendance Team and/or related agencies to offer wider support to the pupil and their family via an **Individual Attendance Plan**

Stage 4

Legal intervention, where appropriate, by the County Attendance Team which may include the issuing of a **Penalty Notice**

All cases are treated individually, e.g. a case where absences have been accrued for term time holidays will be approached very differently (i.e. immediate Stage 4 penalty notice referral to County Attendance Team if National Threshold met) to a case where Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) may be presented (i.e. Stage 2 intervention may be most appropriate).

Consideration of additional needs

Additional factors or barriers to attendance that individual cases present will always be considered in the application of our attendance policy. These may include:

- SEND
- Disability
- Physical and/or mental health difficulties
- Anxiety and EBSA presentations
- Pupil's own voice

Support for Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are then tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through the school's pastoral team, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete a *Strengths and Needs* form with you and consider convening a *Team Around the Family*.

Addressing Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress and can have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at our school will have an **Individual Attendance Plan** which will incorporate multi-agency input. You will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

6: County Attendance Team

The school may refer the parents or guardians to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council for consideration of legal proceedings under the Education Act 1996.

The County Attendance Team, with the school, may encourage you to engage with a *Strengths and Needs* form. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance. **If the pupil has met the National Threshold of 10 sessions (5 whole days or 10 half days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week rolling period, Oxfordshire County Council can issue a penalty notice.** The school can issue a notice to improve, or take action via a non-Attendance referral, a decision which is considered on an individual basis.

Where parents have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, further unauthorised absences may result in a summons to Court under the [Education Act 1996](#).

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 or can be contacted via email at attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

People responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Sarah Lewis, Attendance Officer and Deputy Headteacher
Ms Sarah Moon, Headteacher
Mrs Sarah Dawe, Governor with responsibility for attendance