



Burlish Park Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

DATE: September 2019

RATIFIED BY THE GOVERNING BODY ON: September 2021

REVIEW DATE: September 2021

SIGNED:..... (CHAIR OF GOVERNORS)

DATE:.....



School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).

The DfE have not provided any guidelines as to what they would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the headteacher. Where possible, families of schools should look to have a consistent approach to all leave of absence requests – to try to ensure that requests for siblings who attend different schools are met with the same response by each headteacher who receives a request.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Roles Responsibilities and Procedures

School

- Burlish Park Primary School use the Scholarpack system of registration.
- Morning registration is at 8.50am. Afternoon registration is at 12.50pm for Reception and KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2. Current Nursery registration is at 8.45am for morning children and 12.30pm for afternoon children. From September 2017, Nursery registration will be 9am or 12pm depending on whether it is a full or part-time place.



After a period of 10 minutes the register closes and pupils are marked in the register with code L.

- First day contact is made by Mrs C Wright.
- Burlish Park Primary School will only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- If attendance falls below 90% a letter of concern is sent to parents.
- Burlish Park Primary School has an Education Welfare Officer that follows up persistent absence after a period of time.

Parents/carers

- Parents should inform the school office of a child's absence before 9am. When children return to school a follow up letter should be written to detail the absence. Parents should be aware that, where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence, will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Worcestershire County Council will be considered.
- If leave of absence is required, parents must fill in a leave of absence form available from the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- There is an expectation to work with school and the Rivers Academy Trust to resolve any attendance issues.

Pupils

- Pupils register in their classrooms both in the morning and afternoon.
- If pupils are late, they should enter the building through the school office with a parent or carer who should register on the electronic entry system.

EWO

- Burlish Park Primary School work with Mr Paul Williams who works to reduce persistent absence, improve overall attendance and give advice and support to children, families and schools.
- Mr Williams carries out statutory duties on behalf of Burlish Park Primary School to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance

The school may refer a pupil to Worcestershire County Council where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. Worcestershire County Council will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

Rewards/Celebrations

Burlish Park Primary celebrates good attendance and punctuality. There is an attendance summary on each newsletter with congratulations given to the class with the highest attendance. Burlish Park also reward good attendance through the following:

- Weekly attendance featured in celebration assembly with a reward for the best class.
- The class with the accumulated highest attendance at the end of each half term, receives a celebration lunch in the dining hall.
- The Stourport Oscars – where children from all schools in the Stourport pyramid are brought together to celebrate and receive a certificate.



Religious Observance

Burlish Park Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Worcestershire, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

Burlish Park Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at Burlish Park Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Burlish Park Primary School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

Burlish Park Primary School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:



- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Registration/Punctuality

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases and should be kept for a minimum of date +3 years.

The register must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. It must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

- **School starts at 8.40am** and registers will be taken electronically at 8.50am and again at 12.55pm for KS1 and Early Years and 1.15pm KS2 every day.
- If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked as absent. Pupils who arrive after the registers close at 8.50am should report to the school office and register on the door entry system. The register will then be electronically amended to read "late".
- Registers will be checked on a daily basis by the School Administration Officer to ensure that correct procedures are being followed. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will also monitor the registers during his/her visits.
- Schools are required to notify their EWO of any pupils of compulsory age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason.
- Any pupil with an attendance below 90% is considered as a Persistent Absentee and monitored closely.

Authorised / Unauthorised Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence.

The school uses consistent criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. The school will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to DfE guidelines. These state that:

*Absence should be **authorised** if:*

- The pupil is absent with leave (defined as "leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body").
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.



- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- There is a family bereavement (close relative – parent, or grandparent).
- The pupil is taking part in an approved public performance.
- The pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.
- The pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.
- The pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion. A family holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

Absence should be **unauthorised** if:

- No explanation is forthcoming or the school is dissatisfied with the explanation.

Examples of unauthorised absence may include:

- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (eg, a birthday).
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday or family gathering.

Holidays in term time

Holidays in term time should be avoided and will be marked as unauthorised absence. Families wishing to take a holiday in term time should meet with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to discuss and complete a request form.

It is the school procedure that teachers will not set work for pupils who are absent due to parents taking them on holiday in term time.

Procedures for following up absence

The school office will contact a parent/carer by text message on the first day of absence if a pupil is absent and no reason/explanation has been provided by the parent/carer.

If no response is received a call will be placed to Contact 1 then through the contacts until a reason for the absence is given.

Should there be no reason given from the phone calls this is then escalated to the Headteacher or Deputy Head.



Absence patterns are monitored closely. If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Headteacher or School Administration Officer will contact parents via letter to advise the level of attendance obtained, if the absence continues the parents would be invited to attend a meeting at school.

If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the EWO during his/her visits. Persistent absence may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued to the parent.

Fixed Penalty Notices

A penalty notice will be issued in circumstances of parentally condoned absence where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility to do so.

Penalty notices can be issued in cases of unauthorised absence such as:

- a) There are at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 6 school weeks.
- b) 10 consecutive days' absence with NO reason provided and no contact from the parent. (whereabouts is known).
- c) 6 days or more school days leave of absence has been refused.

In accordance with LA guidelines, the amount of the penalty to be paid is as follows

- £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings.

Where more than one child in a family is involved multiple Notices may be issued. There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice. Where a Penalty Notice is used for unauthorised absence there will be a restriction of no more than two per parent per academic year.

The primary responsibility for issuing a penalty notice rests with the Local Authority. Head teachers may apply to the Local Authority for a penalty notice to be issued. The LA issues penalty notices on behalf of Worcestershire schools in order to ensure consistency and in the event that a prosecution may need to be brought against a parent. Full details of the Worcestershire guidance on fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absence are available on request.

Working in Partnership

Our aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure good attendance so that learning opportunities are maximised.



- The school will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- A broad and balanced curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The class teacher and School Attendance Officer will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be regularly reminded (via the school newsletter, school prospectus, parents' evenings, text messages, etc) of the importance of good attendance.
- On admitting their children to school parents are asked to sign a Home-School Agreement.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be reintegrated back into school upon their return.
- The Headteacher will make half-termly reports to the school's governing body on attendance matters.
- The school will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies – LA, EWO, School Health for example – when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The School Attendance Officer will have regular meetings with the school's EWO in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

The Government has made significant changes to the statutory guidance covering Children Missing in Education (CME). These require both action from the school and the LA. From the 1st September 2016 the Government has introduced two new statutory requirements upon all schools, including academies and independent schools to inform their local authority within 5 working days of adding a pupils name to the admissions register. This does not apply at standard admission points (e.g. beginning or end of school year) only for in year admissions.

The relevant completed form should be sent securely to 'Deletions Registrations and Notifications' via the secure communications page on the Children's Services Portal.



- To notify the LA when a pupil leaves the school outside of the normal time of transfer.
- To notify the LA when a pupil joins the school outside of the normal time of transfer.

For more information - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Appendix A – Register Codes

/	Present am
\	Present pm
B	Educated offsite
C	Other authorised circumstance
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Holiday not agreed
I	Illness
L	Late before register close
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
T	Traveller absence
U	Late after register close
V	Educational visit or trip
X	Non-compulsory school age absence