



Burford Primary School
Priory Lane, Burford, Oxon, OX18 4SG



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'Respect, Aspire, Achieve'

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1.0 Introduction

Burford Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities. All children of compulsory school age have the right to a full-time education and regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

2.0 Aims

Burford Primary School aims to provide an environment where all pupils feel safe, valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. School will therefore work consistently towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure it is achieving its set goals.

3.0 School Procedures

The following procedures will be used to meet the school's attendance targets:

3.1 Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their mark recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O), an approved

educational visit or trip (V), an approved sporting activity (P) or Educated off site (B) (attendance out of school).

3.2 Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, this must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

4.0 Lateness

4.1 Morning Registration

School is open from 8.40am and morning registration will take place at 8.50 am. Between 8.50am & 9.20am pupils will be marked in as late (L). The registers remain open until 9.20am each day; any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having a late attendance after registration is closed (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation.

In cases, for example, where absence at registration is for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

4.2 Afternoon Registration

Afternoon registration will be at 1.00 pm; the registers close at 1.10 pm. Pupils arriving after the start of afternoon school, but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but coded as late (L) before registers close.

5.0 Absence from school

5.1 Parent and Carer responsibilities

5.1.1 First Day of Absence - Parent/Carers must inform the school by 9.00am on the first day their child is going to be absent and if the absence is likely to continue for longer than 48 hours. All absences must be followed up in writing or via email, to explain the reason for the absence and handed in or sent to the school office. If no reason is given within 2 weeks, the absence will become unauthorised.

If parents/carers have not notified school of their child's absence, then the following will apply:

- Following the close of the morning/afternoon registers, either the School Business Manager or the Head Teacher will contact parent/carers by telephone, to enquire why their child is absent
- Once the reason for absence is established, the appropriate code will be entered in the school register
- Should there be no response to the contact, normal safeguarding procedures will be applied.

5.1.2 Medical/dental appointments – parents/carers must make every effort to ensure appointments are arranged outside school hours; where this is not possible, an appointment card or other written confirmation should be provided and handed in to the school office.

5.2 Ten Day Absence

It is a legal requirement for any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days to be referred to Oxfordshire County Council and the school will include details of any action taken.

5.3 Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents, explaining absence, should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

5.4 Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the School Business Manager to be aware of and bring attention to the Head Teacher any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and will be asked to complete a parenting contract.

6.0 Penalty Notices and Legal Action

6.1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those who have parental responsibility and/or those that have day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

6.2 Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects; in these circumstances, parents' fullest support and co-operation are required to tackle the situation. In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to the County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

6.2.1 Penalty Notice

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system. See Oxfordshire County Council's Statutory Code of Conduct:

<https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/schools/files/folders/folders/documents/schoolsnews/2016/PenaltyNoticeCodeofConductPenaltyNoticeNov2016.pdf>

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six-week period;
- They allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- They fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absent mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

6.2.2 Parent Contract

Persistent absence pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. Persistent absence cases may be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

7.0 A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

8.0 Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education eg Charter for learning and working together agreement, Newsletter and Parent Mail

9.0 Leave of Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Head Teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question, using the school's 'Request for Absence due to Exceptional Circumstances' form (*see Appendix A*).

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution as outlined in our 'Warning Letter' to parents/carers.

10.0 Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the School Business Manager and/or the Head Teacher will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school's targets are for:

- Attendance registers, as by law, to be kept for at least 3 years;
- Computer registers to be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes or electronic back-ups kept for 3 years;
- Entries in paper registers must be in ink;
- All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

11.0 Register and Admission Roll keeping.

Legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006. In respect of these requirements, registers must be safely stored; after morning and afternoon registration, registers are returned to the School Office.

12.0 Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll, but not present in school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- i. Unauthorised Absence;
- ii. Authorised Absence;
- iii. Approved Educational Activity.

12.1 Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

12.2 Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

12.3 Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site, but with approval of the school. This would include:

- i. Field trips and educational visits;
- ii. Sporting activities;
- iii. Link courses or approved education off site;
- iv. Most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

13.0 Review of Policy

The school's Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school and reviewed at least every three years, to ensure it reflects current practice and is understood by all staff, including new members of staff.

Signed: Zoey Khan, Chair of Governors

Signed: Jenny Dyer, Head Teacher

Dated: 21 November 2019

Review date: October 2022



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REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Please complete & return to the school office, at least two weeks in advance of absence

DFE (Department for Education) amendments to the attendance regulations, which came into force on 1 September 2013, concerning the granting of leave of absence, states that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Please provide details below of your child's absence:-

Name of Child(ren)

Dates of absence

Reasons for absence

.....
.....

Signed: Dated
(Parent/Guardian)

For office use only

Authorised/Unauthorised

Signed Head Teacher