



Burton-on-the-Wolds Primary Policy on Attendance

1 Introduction

1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

1.3 Principles

- Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.
- All children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.
- 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 each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

This includes:

- **Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **Truancy before or during the school day**
- **Absences which have never been properly explained**
- **Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**
- **Holidays in term time**

3 If a child is absent

3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.

3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.

3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

3.5 Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Attendance is reviewed termly by the Headteacher and students who fall into the **PERSISTANT ABSENCE CATEGORY** will be identified and investigated further. The criteria for a child to be classified in this category are as follows:
 - 14+ absences in the first half term
 - 28+ absences in the second half term
 - 40+ absences in the third half term
 - 52+ absences in the fourth half term
 - 64+ absences in the fifth half term

A PA pupil = an individual having 64+ sessions absent over a school year (approx ½ a terms absence)

- If children are absent due to illness, parents are requested to report this to the school office by close of registration. Failure to do so will result in a phone call to the designated contact by the admin team. At Burton our Telephone system allows a message to be recorded 24 hrs a day and therefore if your child has been ill in the night a message can be left throughout the night to avoid disturbing the family the following day.
- Lateness will also be monitored. If a child arrives after registration closes, then a 'late' mark will be given. Continual lateness will be investigated by the Headteacher and a referral to the EWO may be made.

- If a child is continually absent due to reported illness, then medical documentation may need to be provided by parents/carers from their family GP/hospital.
- All enquiries related to poor attendance will be reported to governors and poor attendance certificates to be recorded in individual children's files.

4 Requests for leave of absence

4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted. Requests for absence due to family holidays must be made in writing to the Headteacher. Requests are considered by the Headteacher in line with the attendance record of the child concerned. If the accepted 5 days has been exceeded then the holiday request will be declined and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the parents would face a £60 fine per child from the government. Critical times in the child's education will also be discouraged for time away from school.

4.2 The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Education Authority – Bronwen Buchanan. The Education Welfare Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this Officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. The Education Welfare Officer is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. The Education Welfare Officer's telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the LA.

- 6.3 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA SIP as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Traveller Children are expected in the academic year to make 200 attendances(100 days).

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

The school works hard to ensure that all children receive the education that they deserve. Those children who are highlighted as having an absence problem will also be communicated to the transition school (Humphrey Perkins High School) in year 6. End of year 6 meetings with the Pastoral Base and Learning and Progress manager – Mr Thompson. Children who are not attending HPHS after Burton will also have their attendance data communicated to their choice of school.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed: Andrew Robinson

date: August 2017