


Burnt Tree Primary School



Attendance And Punctuality Policy

Signed by Governor	
Date	03/10/2023
Review Date	September 2024

Burnt Tree Primary School ATTENDANCE POLICY

PRINCIPLES:

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at Burnt Tree Primary School and establish positive life habits necessary for future success. They also minimise the risks of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse. Regular attendance also encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing on life skills, they will also inevitably miss out on essential learning and on events taking place such as school visits. Children's social skills are also enhanced by regular attendance.

The school displays a positive and proactive ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality and values its partnership with parents/carers and Burnt Tree Primary School to promote good attendance. This policy aims to provide a cohesive approach to tackling attendance within our school ensuring that every child matters.

AIMS:

- to share the responsibility for promoting school attendance amongst everyone at Burnt Tree Primary School and the broader school community;
- to develop and implement an effective attendance policy that touches all aspects of a school's life, and relates directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum – staff particularly strive:
 - i. to encourage all pupils to reach their true potential and eventually become independent learners who value learning with and from others, i.e. have a positive attitude to life-long learning;
 - ii. to value application, perseverance, initiative and independence of thought and action, as well as co-operative endeavours.
- this attendance policy and its implementation should encourage all pupils to attend school more regularly by the implementation of specific measures, e.g.
 - i. registering pupils accurately and efficiently;
 - ii. setting attendance targets for individual pupils, the school and specific year groups (where applicable);
 - iii. contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
 - iv. at least weekly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality;
 - v. regularly reporting school attendance statistics to parents, LA and DFE as appropriate.
- to monitor and evaluate this policy and its implementation by, amongst other means, rigorously collecting and analysing data about attendance to check our progress against measurable outcomes, e.g. National and LA level.

ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW:

It is a legal obligation of all parents/guardians/carers to ensure their child attends regularly, by law all children of compulsory school age must get a proper full time education.

The 1996 Education Act states;

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient fulltime education suitable—

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise“

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTS

All children of compulsory school age should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly. They should also ensure that they are fully aware of the schools attendance policy and adhere to it. In addition to statutory obligations parents are encouraged to sign the Home-School Agreement – a section of which describes the agreed responsibilities of the parents which include ‘a responsibility of parents to make sure their child attends regularly.’

THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

To help fulfil parents important role in their child's education, and to be as informed as possible in any communications or discussions with teachers, parents are requested and encouraged, to the extent feasible:

To ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;

- To notify the School if their child cannot attend for any reason, preferably before 10am on the first day of absence – this is for the child's security as well as administrative reasons;
- To work with the School Staff to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence;
- To attend meetings as required in relation of their child’s attendance;

To discharge their agreed responsibilities parents should always:

- encourage good attendance making sure that their child goes to school regularly and arrives on time;
- take an interest in their child's school work;
- make sure their child understands that the parents do not approve of absence from school;
- support the school in its efforts to control inappropriate behaviour;

- inform the school on the first day of non-attendance;
- co-operate with the school staff to make sure their child overcomes his or her attendance problems and gets a proper education;
- discuss planned absences in exceptional circumstances with the school and apply for permission 15 working days in advance,

PUPILS

- Pupils are actively encouraged to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually at school and at the start of lessons after break.
- Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence, e.g. bullying, racism, etc.
- Pupils should use their best endeavours to pass on absence notes from parents to their class teacher and to pass school correspondence to their parents.
- Pupils must be encouraged to understand the importance of attending school and know that it is compulsory to attend school regularly.
- Pupils should all understand that only 'real' illnesses can be a reason for absence.

ATTENDANCE AND PROSECUTION SERVICE - supports children's entitlement to education

The regular and punctual attendance of pupils at the school where they are registered is both a legal requirement and essential for students to maximise the opportunities available to them.

Legal action (via a referral to the Local Authority) will be a last resort and will follow advice and preventative action from the school. If you're having trouble getting your child to attend school, the school can help. The school will discuss attendance problems with you and agree a plan with you to improve your child's attendance.

The Attendance & Prosecution Service investigates cases of irregular attendance at school and following investigation, may instigate legal action under s444 of the Education Act 1996 – where parents fail to ensure that a child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing body is legally responsible for many aspects of school management including the attendance register and so it is registered with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. However, the Head teacher manages the day-to-day running of the School and in so doing takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy.

To discharge their agreed responsibilities it is suggested that Governors should:

- Meet to discuss whole school attendance regularly (at least termly)

- ii. Be kept updated on all attendance related issues and monitor termly LA School Attendance Data and external RAISE and OFSTED Data.
- iii. Ensure that a designated governor is able to assist with attendance reviews/parent contracts where required. **The named school Governor for Attendance is Sarah Bott.**
- iv. Monitor the school's annual attendance target and its progress towards this on termly basis.
- v. Provide training for all Attendance Leads on at least a termly basis.

THE HEADTEACHER

The Head teacher is required to tell the Attendance and Prosecution Service if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised.

Head teachers can, of course, notify the service earlier if there are areas of concern, however normally the school itself will have made and recorded efforts to address the nonattendance through the three points of contact prior to any intervention:

- action by the class teacher as part of their day-to-day duties;
- action by the Attendance Officer as part of their day-to-day duties;
- involvement of others within the School, e.g. Head teacher or Deputy Head;
- contact with parents and parent/ child interviews;
- records of invites to meetings etc.

Referral to the service would normally take place if:

- a pattern of irregular attendance or lateness is either continuing or worsening;
- parents do not accept their responsibilities for ensuring the child attends school, and are refusing to discuss ways of improving attendance with the School;
- condoned, unjustified absence is increasingly a problem;
- the parents ask for excessive authorised absence.
- pupil overall attendance remains at 90% or less or 10 unauthorised sessions of absences in a five week period.

The Head teacher is also required to maintain two registers:

1. an admission register (known as the school roll) which contains a list of all pupils at the School;
2. an attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age on the admission register. This must be taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Similarly, the School keeps a register of pupils present on the school site during lunch time, this is needed in the event of an emergency to show which pupils need to be accounted for.

The Head teacher ensures that a clear policy on attendance is in place, which is known to staff, pupils and parents. The positive link with parents can be strengthened if the arrangements for notifying absence and the School's policy towards absence (authorised and unauthorised) is regularly publicised. Each term, the School is required to submit to the LA the details of the level of absence within the School via the School Census.

CLASS TEACHER

Class teachers must enforce this policy strictly. If a pupil is absent without explanation when the register is called and electronically submitted, the School Attendance Officer will contact the parents the same day wherever possible. The absence will also be followed up with the parent to ensure that a written note or verbal acceptable explanation is received explaining the absence. Where no reply is received this will be recorded as unauthorised. Coding for all pupils should be completed on a weekly basis – by Attendance Leads.

When a pupil is missing from class for no apparent reason, the class teacher will immediately inform the school office so that the pupil's absence can be further investigated. Class teachers can also contribute to the reduction of unauthorised absence by delivering interesting and engaging lessons and insisting on punctuality for themselves, colleagues and pupils.

School staff will receive regular training in relation to Attendance Policy, Protocol and Guidelines.

FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER

The relationships that Family Support Worker has with parents, school colleagues and partners from other children's services contribute to the range of benefits that improve learning opportunities for pupils and their families.

The Family Support Worker will work with the school in engaging harder-to-reach families, both in supporting their children to participate in curriculum and out of school activities and their parents in taking a more active interest in school life.

The Family Support Worker will focus on early intervention with families and children to help prevent issues from escalating into crises and attempt to reduce the barriers that may exist in relation to attendance.

POLICE

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the police can use their powers to remove truants found in public places and to return them either to their schools or a place designated by

the LA.

INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE RATES

There are many reasons why pupils miss school without permission as such; there is no one solution to the problem of absenteeism- for example setting reward schemes, such as certificates, extra-curricular activities and breakfast clubs. Wherever possible the School works alongside all staff in supporting and implementing attendance initiatives which:

- help children develop the habit of regular attendance including through providing a number of regular initiatives;
- show parents clearly that unjustified absence will be recorded and challenged;
- Visit on the third day of absence to all absentees, regardless of attendance levels;
- minimise problems in KS1 by helping pupils transition from the Foundation Stage and when pupils transfer from KS2 to KS3.

The School has considered initiatives that are most appropriate and always takes into account a pupil's individual circumstances, e.g. setting reward schemes such as certificates, for 100% attendance or effort to attend. Other helpful initiatives include:

- Implementing first day contact with parents of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge. It is hoped that this sends a clear signal to pupils and parents that absence is a matter of concern and will be followed up;
- Encouraging regular attendance checks, scheduled or unscheduled, which are effective particularly when pupils are not with the class teacher;
- Regular weekly monitoring for pupils below 97% and follow up with the support of the Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker;
- Having a member of the admin staff responsible for first day contact and the Head Teacher/ SMT responsible for attendance overall;
- Interviews for target families following weekly monitoring and continued monitoring to ensure attendance improves.
- Governor Panel meeting for pupils that are persistently absent.
- A raffle for pupils with 100% attendance each week with 1 prize of an attendance pencil for each class.
- A weekly Attendance Assembly (raising the profile of Attendance throughout school)
- 100% annual trip, *exceptions made for hospital appointments with letter provided and 1 day religious observance*. Seats also available for 3 pupils with most improved attendance and most improved punctuality.
- Annual big prize draw for children who achieve 98-100% attendance.
- Annual certificate and prize for children who achieve 98-100% attendance
- Termly attendance certificates with Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards at the end of each term.
- 100% weekly raffle ticket, drawn termly for a seat on the annual attendance trip.

- The class with the overall best weekly attendance is awarded with 15 minutes extra social or playtime;
- A Breakfast Club provision for our pupils;
- The issue of termly attendance reports to all parents so that they can actively monitor their own child's attendance.

The Head teacher has made a concerted effort to encourage a good working relationship with parents by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence (on an annual basis) and the school's policy towards authorised absence in the prospectus and regular communications.

KEEPING THE REGISTER

Registers should be treated as legal documents – indeed they may be used as evidence in court cases. For this reason they should be retained for a minimum of three years. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register **must** clearly differentiate between whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised by the School.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Head Teacher - this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. Parents reporting absence should give the reason and date of return for the child. If this is unknown, regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the School Attendance Officer. For periods of extended absence, the school WILL seek the advice of the school nurse and HPA (Health Protection Agency now Public Health England) and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised for the illness.

NB- Reporting an absence does not guarantee authorisation. Authorisation will be considered in relation to the reason and the child's past attendance record is taken into consideration. Medical appointment cards and hospital letters WILL be required for all appointments, in order that an authorisation can be made. No absence below 93% will be authorised unless in extenuating circumstances.

Please note – Absences for Head lice will not be authorised.

Authorised absences are equivalent to 'present' for non-attendance performance table purposes. Even when pupils are engaged in Approved Educational Activity off-site, they must not be marked as present, as good Health and Safety practice requires that the School needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or a real emergency. In the case of a pupil leaving school during a session and/or returning later, care must be taken to maintain the accuracy of who is known to be on site in the case of an emergency - for this

reason an effective signing in and out register for these purposes should also be maintained.

The school **may** authorise absence in the following circumstances at the discretion of the Head Teacher:-

- Personal illness (Excessive or extended absences **will require medical evidence**).
- Medical appointment (Copy of appointment card to be seen and retained)
- Family bereavement.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to child's health and safety.
- Religious observance, necessitating absence from school (limitations apply)
- A travelling child's absence
- Involvement in a public performance
- Approved sporting activity

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the Head Teacher - this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

NB – Please note that NO absences are authorised by the Head Teacher unless the pupil's past attendance record is taken into consideration.

All registers must allow for the original entry and any subsequent correction to be clearly distinguishable and that, on retrieval, they appear in chronological order.

The school will not authorise absence in the following circumstances at the discretion of the Head Teacher:-

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house etc.)
- Leave of absence (except in exceptional circumstances)
- Lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed (**30 minutes after school starts**)
- Special occasions, birthdays (when the school does not agree that leave should be given).
- Looking after siblings
- Head lice
- Family holidays in term time

The Attendance and Prosecution Service has the duty to consider the use of legal action in terms of court action to address incidences of poor attendance.

Leave of Absence

Any requests for leave of absence will be strongly discouraged. Requests for absence will be declined unless the parents/carers are able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances do not include: family holiday, visiting relatives or friends, attending sporting or other events, looking after family members who are unwell, babysitting younger family members, birthdays or shopping etc. Requests for leave of absence during test/exam times will not be authorised.

Parents must apply for leave of absence at least 3 weeks before the requested dates of absence using the school's application form, which can be requested from the school office. The request will be considered and a decision communicated to parents within 5 working days of receipt.

If a pupil fails to return from an agreed period of absence, investigations will be made (telephone calls/home visits/letters to home address) by the Attendance Officer. If school investigations fail to make contact with the parents/pupil the case will be referred to the Children Missing Education Team for the relevant Local Authority who may, after further investigation, inform school that the pupil may be removed from roll. Police welfare checks may also be requested.

Penalty Notices may be used in cases where an application for leave of absence is refused and the pupil is subsequently absent during the dates originally requested. Parents will be warned of potential consequences when an application for leave of absence is declined. Penalty Notices may be used in cases where a pupil is absent without a request for leave of absence being submitted, and where the school is satisfied, after investigation, that the pupil is on an unauthorised holiday.

Where attendance falls below 90% parents may be prosecuted.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Persistent Absentees are pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. The school will refer any individual child whose attendance is 90% to the service at which point legal proceedings could follow, however a variation may be considered on an individual school basis depending on numbers of PAs in the school and school overall attendance levels.

All PAs are tracked and reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Punctuality and Lateness:

The school actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. Frequent lateness of pupils can provide grounds for prosecution of parents.

All teachers must ensure that registers are completed electronically by 9:05am in the morning. In the afternoon Early Years registers should be taken by 12.55pm, Key Stage One by 1.10pm and Key Stage Two by 1.25pm. The school completes a punctuality trawl each half term and targets families who are at risk. A monitoring period will then follow and if progress is not made then a referral to the Attendance and Prosecution Service will be made (10 lates = unauthorised absence)

Lateness is often an indication of more serious problems, but can also be the result of poor time management. 2 minutes late everyday (over 2 weeks) equates to 20 minutes of missed opportunities for learning:

- The school day starts at 08.45am.
- If you are late after the register has closed you will be asked to sign the late book.
- All late students are marked appropriately using code “L” if your child is late before the register closes, “U” after the close of register. These codes are used at the discretion of the Head Teacher.
- School will send out letters to parents whose children are late on more than 3 occasions per half term.
- School operates a daily late gate.

Pupils Present At Registration

The school uses the E registration system, which must be marked directly onto the computer.

/ - is entered to show the pupil is present in the morning session

\ - is entered to show the pupil is present in the afternoon session

N - is entered to show the pupil is absent

If the pupil arrives late this is recorded in the signing in register in the reception area by the parent.

NB - If a pupils does arrive late following register close, teachers should always send a member of the Learning Support Team, if the pupil is not old enough to return to the office alone as directed by the teacher, to check that they have been signed in or have been added to the system to comply with current fire regulations.

Annotation for Absences

The attendance system records absence with N for no reason yet supplied. The official register is printed for monitoring by the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer on a monthly basis where the appropriate attendance codes are monitored.

Codes used for unauthorised absence:

Late after register close (9.25am or EY – 1.15PM, KS1 1.30PM AND KS2 1.45PM) U

Unauthorised circumstances O

Annual Family Holiday (not agreed) G

No reason yet provided for absence N

Codes used for authorised absence:

Educated off site (*incl. hospitalisation*) B

Other authorised circumstances C

Dual registration D

Excluded E

Leave of Absence (in exceptional circumstances) (agreed) H

Illness I

Interview J

Late before register close L

Medical/Dental M

Approved Sporting Activity P

Religious Observance R

Study Leave S

Traveller Absence T

Educational Visit V

Work Experience W

Only staff should attend X

Enforced closure Y

Attendance not required !

These codes and the criteria of authorised absence are all recorded by the Attendance Officer into the Attendance System.

Temporary School Closures

Where a school has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire or other structural damage or for in-service training, no attendance registers are needed. This will be coded appropriately.

NB for severe weather closures the school will liaise with local education providers to ensure continuity of provision in the area.

Deleting Pupils from the Admissions Register

There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register. Where a school has decided to remove a pupil from their admission roll for any reason, they should notify their Attendance and Prosecution Service for advice. If a pupil is to be taken off the admissions register because the child is moving to another area or school, staff should first find out the name and address of the new school and when the pupil will start, confirming this information with the receiving school. School staff should be concerned:

- if the parents do not name the receiving school;
- if a pupil has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation;
- if a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a Leave of Absence (in exceptional circumstances) in term-time.

If schools are concerned they should alert the Area Child Protection Representative (as named in the School's Child Protection Policy) without delay. The LA's Designated Child Protection Officer will then decide whether to alert Children's Services who may in turn involve the police. If, however, schools have good reason to believe that a crime may have been committed, they should contact the police directly.

When a family returns to their country of origin for a long period of time, the school will work with the family to draw up an Extended Holiday Contract, stating the agreed date of return. Should the pupil not return at the agreed date, then the child will be taken off roll as agreed by the school, parents and Attendance and Prosecution Service.

Attendance Registers – Security

The School keeps the attendance registers secure on the school network and paper records relating to monitoring when not in use and are located in the **admin office**. Older paper based registers are archived in the locked Stock Room and/ or filing cabinets located in the office areas archive cupboard

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The School will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the School and staff, pupils and parents should be reminded regularly of its contents. Effective monitoring/evaluation of the attendance policy and guidelines are dependent upon the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date records. The criteria by which the monitoring and evaluation of the provision is undertaken are described below:

ATTENDANCE REPORTS TO PARENTS: The school issues termly attendance reports to ALL parents in order that they can begin to actively monitor their own child's attendance. The school sets challenging targets for overall attendance and expects all pupils to reach the target of 95%+ for each academic year. Children who fall below the agreed levels will be targeted by the school, where applicable, in order to provide support and a possible solution to the on-going absence.

If parents are at all worried about their child's attendance levels or wish to discuss any part of the school attendance policy further, they are encouraged to contact the school for an appointment. Parents are also encouraged to offer their views on attendance when meeting with the Head Teacher or class teacher at formal consultation evenings, informally on a day to day basis and in the bi-annual school parent survey.

PUPILS:

The degree to which the targets have been met - these include:

- pupil achievement, e.g. increase in attendance over time;
- the numbers of fixed-period and/or permanent exclusions;

Any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected pupils and those responsible for teaching them;

The number, frequency or extent of incidents of poor behaviour in school;

The rate of reintegration into mainstream education of pupils who have been out of school;

The number of reports of bullying;

Any pertinent feedback from pupils;

OUTSIDE AGENCIES & LA:

The instigation of effective links with LAs' behaviour support plans;

The effectiveness of a partnership approach, making full and appropriate use of the experience and expertise of all agencies with relevant skills, e.g. the Attendance and Prosecution Service and Educational Psychology Services, voluntary organisations and the private sector wherever appropriate;

BUDGET:

Any appropriate adjustments in budget allocation to reflect changing needs;

PLANNING:

The consideration of attendance issues in development planning. Planning should have a clear implementation strategy and statement of objectives and targets, together with performance indicators against which the effectiveness of provision can be measured;

Time allocated to planning for pupils with special needs related to attendance;

The effects on school ethos/atmosphere related to attendance and related policies;

STAFF/INSET:

Involvement by all staff in INSET courses relating to attendance issues as required;

School management involvement in attendance issues;

Any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected pupils and those responsible for teaching them;

INDEPENDENT REPORTS:

Analysis and publication of OFSTED/RAISE/ LA reports.

Date: September 2023

Policy Review September 2024