



# Buckland Primary School

*Believe, Excel, Strive, Together*



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Originator:	Attendance Officer
Review date	September 2018
Next Annual Review Due:	September 2019

This document outlines our expectations regarding attendance and was drawn up by the Headteacher and the Governors with the assistance of Surrey County Council and our Educational Welfare Officer.

### Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- ◆ support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ◆ ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- ◆ enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- ◆ make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

### Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. It has been proved that irregular attendance can severely impede academic and social development. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

### Our Expectations

Our expectation is that every child should attend school regularly. The Department of Education define regularly as "attending on every occasion when the pupil is required to attend". This definition means that every child should have 100% attendance. The only exceptions are the ones set out in legislation: sickness, unavoidable causes, religious holidays, authorised absences, local authorities' failure to make statutory travel arrangements or the parent's need to travel for business (subject to certain conditions).

### When your child is absent

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given for these absences. Only the Headteacher can officially authorise an absence, but unless there is a concern, the staff will usually do this on his/her behalf. Parents/carers provide reasons for absences and the school must decide whether or not they justify authorisation according to government guidelines.

<u>Examples of Authorised Absence</u>	<u>Examples of UNAUTHORISED absence</u>
✓ Genuine illness of the pupil (medical evidence may be requested)	X a shopping trip or a birthday treat
✓ Unavoidable hospital/dental appointment for the pupil-copy of letter required (not regular check ups)	X a holiday
✓ death of a near relative	X oversleeping due to late night
✓ religious observance (faith of the parents/carers)	X looking after other ill children
	X letting the gas man in

Whenever a child is absent from school the parent/carer must

- ◆ contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence and send in a written note detailing the absence when the child returns;

- ◆ if possible let the school know in advance of any planned absences, e.g. hospital appointments and provide a copy of the appointment letter.

**Wherever possible medical/dental appointments should be made outside school hours.**

### **School Times**

- ◆ The school day for Reception and Years 1&2 begins at 8.45am. At 9.00 the school bell rings and we kindly ask parents to leave, staff will take the register and begin the day. Pupils may enter their classrooms from 8.45am. Registration closes at 9.30am, if pupils arrive after this time they will be marked absent for the whole morning.
- ◆ The school day for Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 begins at 8.40am. Children are allowed into the playground from 8.30am when the school gate opens and are expected to be in their classroom ready for registration by 8.45am. Registration closes at 9.15am, if pupils arrive after this time they will be marked absent for the whole morning.
- ◆ Lunchtime registration is at 12.45pm for Infants and 1.00pm for Juniors.
- ◆ School finishes at 2.55pm for Reception and Year 1& 2 and at 3.00pm for the older year groups

It is your legal responsibility as parent/carer to ensure that the child in your care attends school regularly (as defined above), and that they get up in the morning in time to arrive punctually.

### **Getting to school on time: 8.45am for Juniors, 9.00am for Infants**

When the class arrives on time:

- ◆ registration takes place quickly and smoothly;
- ◆ the day gets off to a good start for everyone;
- ◆ everyone hears information given and is included in important explanations and discussions. This ensures that everyone knows what to do and what is expected of them.

When a child arrives late:

- ◆ it interrupts concentration;
- ◆ it wastes valuable learning time;
- ◆ the teacher has to repeat information/instructions whilst others have to wait;
- ◆ the late child is at an immediate disadvantage because they may have missed discussions where ideas were shared and will be generally unsettled.
- ◆ If a child is not at school by the times specified he/she will be marked absent. If they subsequently arrive after the register has been taken then they will be marked as late.

### **How can you help**

You can help the child you care for by:

- ◆ ensuring they have everything they need ready for school the night before;
- ◆ ensuring regular bedtimes and wake up times on school days;
- ◆ ensuring they are at school every day and arrive at school punctually;
- ◆ talking to a member of the school staff if there is a problem.
- ◆ informing the school by 10am on the first morning if your child is going to be absent
- ◆ following up a child's absence with a note/letter explaining the reason for absence
- ◆ If your child has an unavoidable medical appointment, send a copy of the relevant letter into the school.

### **Taking the register**

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. If a pupil has to leave school for any reason during the day, the parent/carer must contact the school staff with an explanation. Pupils leaving the school site during the day must exit via the school office.

Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools or employers as necessary.

### **What the School does**

- ◆ We monitor attendance on a weekly, monthly, half termly and termly basis to ensure all children are attending regularly.
- ◆ We inform parents by letter if their child's attendance is a cause for concern
- ◆ We invite parents in to meet with the Headteacher or Welfare Officer if a child's attendance is not at expected levels
- ◆ If having met with the Headteacher or Welfare Officer the child's attendance has not improved then we will make a referral for the family to the Educational Welfare Officer for further support.

### **Holidays in Term time**

Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates that are published up to 2 academic years in advance. Government guidelines state that no holidays should be taken during term time so the school is unable to authorise any holiday requests. In very exceptional circumstances please apply in writing to the headteacher who will give your request due consideration.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices – Information direct from Surrey County Council**

Penalty Notices are issued:

1. To address pupil's poor attendance by demonstrating that parental failure to ensure children attend school regularly will not be tolerated and;
2. To deter parents from taking children out of school during term time without the authorisation of the school

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". The Headteacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

### **Penalty notices may also be used by the Local Authority in the following circumstances:-**

1. Unauthorised absences or late arrival after the closure of registration, on 7 occasions in any six week period (not including school closures).
2. Pupils identified by Police and Education Welfare Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols, who have incurred unauthorised absences.
3. When an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours within the first 5 days of an exclusion without justifiable reason.
4. The issuing of a penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances: Unauthorised leave of absence in term time without the authorisation of the school. (5 days/10 sessions or more within a 3 month period – this DOES NOT need to be consecutive).

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period the Local Authority must prosecute the recipient for failing to ensure regular school attendance under section 444 Education Act 1996.

Please be aware that **each** parent is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for **each** child who incurs unauthorised absences, for example, if there are two parents and one child, each parent will receive one Penalty Notice. If there are two parents and two children incurring unauthorised absences, each parent will receive two Penalty Notices, which in this case would amount to £120 each if paid within 21 days.

**Let's all work together for the benefit of your child.**

# Did you know .....

- Each year there are only 190 school days, this means that there are 175 days for shopping, birthday treats, non urgent medical appointments, dental appointments and holidays etc
- If a child misses 8 days of school in a year then they are out of school more than they are in school!
- If a child misses a day a week for their entire school life it is the equivalent of missing 2 years of school.

## Impact of poor attendance

% Attendance	= % absence	= Days missed	= approx GCSE grades dropped	= weeks missed	= Years missed (over 5 years of education)
100%	0%	0	0	0	0
90%	10%	19	1	4	0.5
80%	20%	38	1-2	8	1
70%	30%	57	2-3	12	1.5
60%	40%	76	3-4	15	2
50%	50%	95	4-5	19	2.5

## Late Arrivals

<u>5</u> minutes late	=	<u>3</u> days lost each year
<u>10</u> minutes late	=	<u>6.5</u> days lost each year
<u>15</u> minutes late	=	<u>10</u> days lost each year
<u>20</u> minutes late	=	<u>13</u> days lost each year
<u>30</u> minutes late	=	<u>19</u> days lost each year