



September 2021

BUCKLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Believe, Excel, Strive, Together

Attendance Newsletter

As we all know going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education. Children learn new things when they are in school every day – missing school risks pupils falling further behind. During the pandemic your child has had disruption to the last 2 academic years of education, this makes it all the more important for them to be in school every day!

What a challenging 18 months we have all been through! The Covid pandemic has affected family life, social life, leisure time, school and work life, physical and mental health for many families across our country.

Going forward I am sure you will agree that as a community we still have some challenges to face as we approach the winter months, however we are working hard at school to ensure the children are able to catch up on their missed learning and will be able to continue to progress in their learning and achieve their BEST.

Our expectation in line with our attendance policy is that all children attend school every day i.e. 100% attendance. We are aware that during this time there may be an occasion where your child may be unwell and of course your child should remain home if not well enough to attend school, e.g. if they test positive for COVID, otherwise it is often worth sending them to school even with a little snuffle or tummy ache – you would be amazed how quickly that disappears when they see their friends and start their learning and playing in the classroom.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

If there is a situation where your child will need to be absent from school, then please complete a "Request for leave of absence" form which can be downloaded from the website or a hard copy obtained from the office. We would like to remind parents that you may be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice if your child has unauthorised absence – please see the detailed information overleaf from Surrey's Inclusion Team and Court Office regarding unauthorised absence at school.

There is also some information on the Surrey County council website – please click on the links below:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/attendance-and-absence>

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/at-school/attendance-and-absence/legal-processes-used-to-enforce-school-attendance-guidance-for-parents>



Every Child Matters and Every Day Counts!

If at any time you would like to discuss your child's attendance then please contact Emma Hawthorn, our Welfare Officer who would be happy to meet or chat with you. Emma can be contacted directly on inclusion@bucklandprimary.surrey.sch.uk or via the school office on 01784 455022.

Information from Surrey's Inclusion Team and Courts Office

We are aware that the pandemic has had an effect on families, but the expectation is still that every child should now be attending school full time. If you consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to your request, please let the school have full details. Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis.

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school (absence without the agreement of the school or not covered by a medical note) and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances :-

1. Pupils identified by police and Inclusion Officers (formerly Education Welfare Officers) engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

2. Leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more).

- **Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**
- **The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**
- In such cases the Headteacher/Governing Body must decide whether there are exceptional circumstances. They may request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised.

Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

3. Finally, the issuing of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance.

This will be considered when a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 6 school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you act without delay to secure their regular attendance.

If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement in your child's attendance, please contact your child's school or the Inclusion Officer.

Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice

The amount payable for a Penalty Notice issued in any of the above circumstances is currently £60 if paid within **21** days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £120 if paid after **21** days but within **28** days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the local Authority must consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the offence for which the Notice was originally issued.

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 incur unauthorised absences, each parent will receive two Penalty Notices, which in this case would amount to £120 each if paid within 21 days.

Advice and support is available from an Inclusion Officer by contacting your local Education Office as follows :-

North West - Tel: 01483 518130 South West- Tel: 01483 517179
North East - **Tel: 01372 833588** South East - Tel: 01737 737777