



BURLAIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is at the heart of our school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. As a rights-respecting school we not only teach about children's rights but also model rights and respect in all relationships - Linked to Articles 28, 29, 31, 32 of the UNCRC.

INTRODUCTION

The legal framework governing attendance at school is set by successive Education Acts.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that where children of compulsory school age (5-16) are registered at a school, they should attend regularly. Unless a child is engaged in an approved educational activity away from school site or absent with the school's authority, they should be at school.

Burlais Primary School works in close partnership with the LA to ensure that all pupils attend regularly. The LA exercises its responsibility through the Education Welfare Service and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO visits the school on a regular basis and checks the registers at regular intervals throughout the year.

The law states that the school has a duty to keep an admission register of all pupils, which serves as the school roll, and an attendance register. (Section 434 of the Education Act 1996). Attendance registers must be called twice daily, at the start of the morning and start of /once during the afternoon session. The register must show whether each child is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site, or absent. In addition, where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised. Authorised absence means that either the school has given approval in advance, or that a satisfactory explanation has been given afterwards.

Registers for morning and afternoon sessions must be kept up to date. Burlais Primary School uses computerised attendance registers. Print outs are provided weekly and reasons for absence recorded. The school is registered with Data Protection. Registers as a data user under the Data Protection Act 1984.

The Governing Body is required to produce an annual report for parents including reference to the school's attendance figures. This information is the same as that which is required to be published in the School Prospectus.

The Headteacher provides a report on attendance for the Governing Body in her termly Headteacher's Report.

OUR AIMS

At Burlais Primary School we aim:

- To ensure that parents are informed of our expectations for regular attendance. (Please refer to the School Prospectus, School Newsletters and School Web Site)
- To ensure that parents realise the importance of punctuality
- To ensure that parents see themselves as partners with school in the education of their children
- To impress upon children the importance of regular, punctual attendance
- To ensure that parents are aware of the procedures for notifying school of a child's absence
- *To ensure that parents are aware of the guidance regarding requests for term-time absences for holidays.
- To ensure that parents are aware of the protocol regarding Fixed Penalty Notices
- To ensure that all registers are correctly marked
- To ensure that all teachers realise their statutory duties relating to registration procedures
- To ensure that staff are aware of the work of the EWO
- To ensure that the school maintains a close working relationship with the EWO
- To ensure that the school sets targets for improving pupil attendance

*Whilst considering each request on its merits, the Headteacher will scrutinise the taking of term time holidays and will apply their discretion based upon the knowledge of pupil and their family. Where possible and in appropriate circumstances the taking of term time holidays will be actively discouraged. Parents are advised to avoid term time disruption and reminded regularly of the link between attainment, attendance and punctuality.

The Local Authority is fully supportive of the national drive to raise school attendance, recognising the crucial link between attendance and attainment. Great strides have been made in Swansea and across Wales to ensure that excellent attendance is a priority. Parents are reminded that according to the “Inclusion and Pupil support Guidance 2006 *“Only schools, and not parents, can authorise an absence, and schools must consider whether the reason for absence is reasonable before doing so (Section 2 (2.3)).”*

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THE ABOVE?

1. Parents are informed of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality during Induction Meetings and via the School Prospectus, and regular reminders on the school newsletters. Parents are made aware that nursery pupils are included as part of the school’s attendance procedures also
2. As a school we take a positive approach to punctuality and regular attendance will be highlighted in school assemblies and school reports. Incentive certificates/stickers will be used to encourage good practice
3. If a class teacher identifies a problem with attendance they alert the Headteacher and School Administration Officers who will check attendance details. The Headteacher will then contact the EWO and an appropriate course of action will be decided upon.
4. At all stages the matter is dealt with sensitively and we appreciate that often there are genuine reasons for lateness or absenteeism developing which, perhaps the parent/carer will find difficulty in discussing. The school may be in a position to help here.
5. Children are gently and sympathetically made aware of the importance of punctuality by their class teacher and through school assemblies. The Headteacher should be informed of regular occurrences of lateness so that the reasons for this can be established and the EWO informed if necessary
6. Teachers will take great care in marking their registers, adopting the procedures outlined in detail by the EWO. The importance of careful, consistent registration cannot be over-emphasised.
7. If a child is away from school every attempt will be made by the school to contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence. Parents will then be requested to keep the school informed regarding their child’s illness.
8. Letters of explanation for absence should be carefully retained by the class teacher for the academic year. Registers must be called twice a day and

must show whether each pupil is present, engaged in an approved off site activity or absent

Accurate registration, preservation and security of registers are important. It must always be remembered that registers may be used in evidence in cases e.g. where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences or, as evidence in a divorce case where there is a dispute over custody of a child/children. Any member of staff unsure of the exact procedure for marking should consult the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or School Admin Officers

THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

NAW Circular 45/91 stated that "the principle function of the Education Welfare Service is to help parents and LAs meet their statutory obligations on school attendance"

The service is empowered to approach a child's family to make enquiries where it is thought that a child is absent without good reason. When a EWO is dissatisfied with the reasons given for absence, he/she can initiate formal proceedings. However, we also see the role of the EWO a supportive link between home and school and work closely with our EWO and other agencies on matters relating to attendance as part of the school's Attendance Plan.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

The Welsh Government (WG) Education (Penalty Notice)(Wales) Regulations 2013 states that Local Authorities (LA's) are required by law to adhere to the Education Act 1996 section 444 to include penalty notices as one of the interventions to promote better school attendance.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 provide that certain cases of unauthorised absences can be dealt with by way of a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine of up to £120 and may be issued to a parent / carer as a result of a child's regular non-attendance at school / educational provision.

The school adheres to the code of conduct for penalty notices as issued by ERW and agreed by your Local Authority, and therefore may request the local authority to issue a penalty notice in certain cases.

ATTENDANCE OF STAFF

In the same way as Governors monitor pupil attendance, they have the same overall duty to monitor staff absence. This occurs on a regular basis with the context of the Headteacher's report to the Governing Body.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if deemed necessary.

Policy Date: January 2013
Reviewed: March 2015
Reviewed: June 2016
Reviewed: December 2021
Reviewed: September 2022
Reviewed: September 2023
Reviewed: September 2024