



BURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

“In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they can see your good deeds and give honour to your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

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Bury Church of England High School will provide an environment in which every pupil feels valued, cared for and welcomed. The school's ethos will demonstrate that pupils feel their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that follow-up action will be taken. We recognise the clear link between the attendance of pupils and their progress.

The aim of this policy, therefore, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance for individual pupils within the school. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for pupils to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing a strong link between excellent attendance & excellent examination results. In order to achieve this, all members of our school community have an important contribution to make.

1. AIMS

- To work in partnership to ensure all young people have an excellent level of attendance. Our school target is for each pupil to have an attendance score of 96% or above.
- To promote 100% attendance across the school community.
- To promote 100% punctuality across the school community.
- To ensure we have clear and robust procedures for registration ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.
- To have clear systems and structures for analysing our attendance and punctuality data to inform pastoral intervention.
- To have a graduated approach to attendance and punctuality intervention to support young people and families.
- To provide additional support for young people who may be vulnerable to having poor levels of attendance e.g. pupils with additional needs, pupils with Health Plans, children who are looked after by the local authority, children with a social worker.
- To proactively address persistent absenteeism. This will be achieved through early help and swift intervention if it arises. Below 90% attendance is classed nationally as being persistently absent from school.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department of Education (DfE), 'working together to improve school attendance' and the "school attendance parental responsibility measures" published May 2022.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The school will ensure that:

- excellent levels of attendance are promoted and rewarded;
- pupils are registered accurately and efficiently;
- parents/carers are contacted on the first day of absence if they have not contacted school;
- attendance targets are set for individual pupils and year groups;
- attendance and punctuality is regularly reviewed;

- interventions are put in place to reduce absenteeism (see Appendix 1 for stages of intervention) and appropriate external agencies are involved if and when necessary.

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly;
- inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences;
- copy up any work missed from time off school.

The parents/carers will:

- ensure good attendance (96% and above) and punctuality;
- support the schools interventions to promote positive attendance;
- inform the school on each day of absence and give specific reasons before 9:00am by telephone call (0161 797 6236) or email at offman@burychurch.bury.sch.uk
- discuss planned absences with the school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time;
- send in a note to the Form Tutor to explain the reason for absence;
- seek medical advice if illnesses persist.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Full day appointments will only be authorised at the school's discretion.

Form tutors

Form tutors have the responsibility of registering pupils' attendance at the beginning of the morning session. If SIMS is not working, tutors must complete a paper version and send to the general office.

Form tutors will ensure that the registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations.

Form tutors have a significant role to play in encouraging pupils to be punctual and to attend school each day and also in recognising patterns of absenteeism. They are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for pupils and prevent concerns from escalating.

Form tutors will:

- monitor patterns of attendance and punctuality using Power BI;
- check absence notes from parents/carers for their authenticity and pass these to the Attendance Officer.

Class teachers

Class teachers model good punctuality by being ready to register pupils at the beginning of the lesson.

Class teachers will:

- record the number of minutes late if a pupil arrives after the register has been taken (right click on the name and enter minutes late);
- follow up lateness which may include issuing detentions in line with the school behavior policy;

- notify Pupil Support if a pupil is missing from class but is marked present at registration. This should be done immediately via email;
- NOT allow pupils to leave the classroom to use the toilet unless a medical issue or toilet pass has been issued (coded **RED** on the SIMS register).

Heads of Year

Heads of Year are responsible for discussing with form tutors problems relating to pupil attendance.

Heads of Year, in conjunction with the Attendance Officer, will:

- liaise closely with form tutors in checking that registers are completed accurately;
- conduct parental meetings in person or via the telephone to address the attendance issue of the child and strategies to improve;
- complete home visits to encourage positive attendance and to break down barriers;
- analyse the attendance data weekly and half termly to identify areas/pupils of concern and intervene appropriately. This will be discussed during fortnightly meetings with the Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and safeguarding).

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will:

- contact parents on the first day of absence if contact is not made with school;
- notify parents/carers of unauthorised absences on those occasions when a pupil has been absent for three days and no reason has been received from the parents/carers;
- monitor pupil absence and raise concerns about levels of attendance with parents/carers, Head of Year and DSL;
- ensure that registers are accurate and that all pupils are accounted for;
- co-ordinate, if a pupil is missing, a search for the pupil and notify SLT if the pupil cannot be located, according to safeguarding procedures;
- notify relevant agencies if there are concerns for a child's immediate safety, e.g. police, social care, etc;
- contribute to reporting by sharing appropriate attendance and punctuality data, e.g. Pastoral and Governors meetings.

4. THE SCHOOL DAY

The school day for pupils begins at 8.35am with the 'Warning Bell'. By this time, all pupils should be on the school's premises to make their way to form.

At 8.40am, when the 'Registration Bell' is sounded, pupils should be in form with form tutors.

Pupils entering the school premises after the 'Registration Bell' are late for school. These pupils **MUST** report to the Main Office where they must sign in and give a reason for late arrival.

Registers close at 9.10am. If pupils arrive after this time, they are marked absent for the AM session.

Afternoon registration should be completed by 1.20pm at the beginning of Period 4 with a class teacher.

The school day ends at 2.55pm.

5. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Parents/carers are asked to telephone (0161 797 6236) or email the school on offman@burychurch.bury.sch.uk on the first day of absence, preferably before 9.00am, to notify a child's absence.

Authorised absence, e.g. illness, must be supported by a phone call or letter from the parents/carers explaining the reason for the absence.

Pupils who need to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents/carers notifying the form tutor/Office/Pastoral Team of the reason. This should be recorded on SIMS at the beginning of the school day.

Parents who need their child to leave the school premises during the school day and to make their own way alone to an appointment MUST phone school to acknowledge this to reinforce truancy and safeguarding procedures. Without speaking to a parent/carer, no child will be allowed off school premises.

Pupils MUST sign out at the Main Office when leaving the premises.

Where parents/carers fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School will endeavour to contact them or record as an unauthorised absence.

6. IDENTIFYING AND TACKLING POOR ATTENDANCE (SEE APPENDIX 1: Graduated response)

Attendance levels and patterns for individuals, form groups, year groups and the whole school are carefully monitored and action taken to address poor attendance at each level via Head of Year, form tutors, Attendance Officer and Pupil Support Team.

Long term absentees are provided with appropriate support to enable them to make a positive return to school. Early identification of potential poor attendees is part of the school's primary liaison work prior to transition. Appropriate strategies are put in place to support pupils and parents where appropriate.

7. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE (SEE APPENDIX 3: Attendance codes)

Penalty Notices are issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence. Parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice as part of the Attendance graduated response (Appendix 1) process.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority to the family home. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £60 per parent, per child. Non-payment of the Penalty within the 28 days' time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- the school has not given prior consent for an absence to be authorised by the completion of an Out of School request form (forms obtainable from the Main Office) and the absence request has not been authorised in advance;
- the school does not accept the given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence;
- medical evidence requested by school is not forthcoming;
- no explanation of absence is received.

8. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

The Government amended key legislation which came into force with effect from 1st September 2013 relating specifically to the authorisation of leave of absence during term time. This decision was made to encourage schools to take a firmer stance on unnecessary absence and to dispel the myth held by many parents/carers that there is an entitlement to take time off for holidays in term time.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence. The school asks all parents/carers not to book holidays during term time. Any savings that parents/carers may make by taking holidays in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

If a pupil is absent from school for a holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the school is obliged to pass this information on to the Local Authority which may result in a penalty notice being issued.

It is hoped that parents/carers will acknowledge and understand the limitations placed on schools in granting any leave in term time and that parents/carers support the school as it continues to maintain high standards of attendance.

9. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE IN TERM TIME

The school will authorise absence due to religious observance, but the day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body. The school may only allow one day of authorised absence under these circumstances. All requests for leave due to religious observance must be made in advance and in writing to the Headteacher, using a (purple) **Out of school request form** available from the Main Office.

10. EMERGENCY CLOSURE, E.G. SNOW DAYS/PANDEMIC

If the school is to be closed on any school day because of adverse weather conditions or a particular problem on the school site itself, the school website will be updated on <https://www.burychurch.bury.sch.uk/> with the relevant information.

A text will be sent to all parents/carers who must ensure that details of their mobile numbers are up to date with the school. A message will also be put on the school website.

There will also be a posting on the Bury Council website and announcements and notifications via the local press/radio. In the event of an unexpected school closure - pupils will be informed of any work being provided via **their pupil email, Satchel One or TEAMS**.

11. INTERNAL ABSENCE FROM LESSONS

Pupils should never be allowed to leave the premises during the school day without permission of a Head of Year/SLT, by the notification of an authorised pupil Out of School request form or by a phone call from a parent/carer where the absence relates to a medical appointment.

- If a pupil does not arrive at their lesson, the class teacher will immediately email Pupil Support for clarification.
- Pupil Support will check if the pupil has been sent to First Aid and check Reception to see if they have signed out and left the school site officially.

- If a pupil has not signed out officially and they are believed to be still on the premises, then available staff should search the school site.
- If the pupil is not found within a brief period of time, the parents/carers will be contacted by Pupil Support/Head of Year/SLT. If the school has concerns regarding a young person's welfare, they may also contact the police and/or social services.
- If a member of staff finds the pupil, Pupil Support and the Safeguarding Lead must be told at once. Parents/carers, police and other authorities will be notified where appropriate.
- If the pupil is Looked After, then the Designated Teacher for LAC, police and social worker must be notified.

12. CHILDREN WHO RUN AWAY FROM SCHOOL

If a child runs away from school, the Attendance Officer will liaise with the Pupil Support Team and make contact with parents/carers and, if deemed necessary, the police/social services will also be contacted.

APPENDIX 1 - GRADUATED RESPONSE

Strategies for promoting excellent attendance and punctuality

Excellent attendance and punctuality are a priority for all pupils. This is promoted and encouraged through form time and assemblies.

Punctuality concerns

Lateness to school:

- Pupils who are late for school will be issued a 15 minute break detention by Miss Heaton (Attendance Officer). If they fail to attend this, an email will be sent home informing parent/carers that their child has a 1 hour SLT detention the following Friday after school.

Lateness to lesson:

- Staff use SIMs to enter late mark and number of minutes late.
- Form tutor to monitor punctuality via Power BI and encourage improvement during form time.
- Head of Year to contact home if patterns of lateness persist.

Graduated Response: Intervention when attendance is a concern

Attendance %	Actions:
98-100% Excellent- Children are accessing all learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly recognition and rewards in form and year group assemblies • Whole school, year group and form group success celebrated on social media comms. Celebratory emails sent from FTs/ HoYs
96-97% Good- Very few learning opportunities are missed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly recognition and rewards in form and year group assemblies. • Whole school, year group and form group success celebrated on social media comms. • Celebratory emails sent from FTs/ HoYs FT monitoring
94-95% Risk of underachievement. Up to 10 school days absent in an academic year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FT conversation with pupil and phone call home / email to parent / carer • Attendance officer letter 1 • Pre-referral meeting 1 (HoY / AO) <p>Actions and interventions monitored by AHT at HoY line management meeting</p>
92-93% High risk of underachievement. Up to 15 school days absent in the academic year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance officer letter 2 • Pre-referral meeting 2 (AHT / HoY) • Home visit arranged. <p>Actions and interventions monitored by AHT at HoY line management meeting</p>
90-92% Severe risk of underachievement. Up to 19 school days absent in the academic year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance officer letter 3 • Pre-referral meeting 3 (AHT / HoY) • Home visit arranged. <p>Actions and interventions monitored by AHT at HoY line management meeting</p>
<90% Severe risk of underachievement. Up to 22 school days absent in the academic year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance officer letter 4 (intention to prosecute) • Referral to LEA / MASH if necessary • Pre-referral meeting 4 (AHT / HoY) • Further home visit arranged. • Possible referral to external agencies (i.e. social services, MASH) • Possible CME submitted. <p>Actions and interventions monitored by AHT at HoY line management meeting</p>

APPENDIX 2 - COVID19 guidance relating to attendance

The DfE guidance 'Schools COVID-19 operational guidance' was withdrawn in April 2022. However, the following advice is available on the DfE website at <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/14/what-are-the-latest-rules-around-covid-19-in-schools-colleges-nurseries-and-other-education-settings/> and as shown below in italics:

Since March 2022 when the final Covid restrictions were lifted the UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) has advised that COVID-19 should be managed like other respiratory infections, such as flu.

COVID-19 presents a low risk to children and young people. This, combined with high vaccination rates in the population, means there are no longer specific rules relating to COVID-19 in schools, colleges, childcare and other education settings.

Here's what the guidance states:

What happens if a staff member or my child tests positive for COVID-19?

For children and young people aged 18 and under who test positive for COVID-19, the advice is to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for three days. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Adults with a positive COVID-19 test result are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for five days, which is when they are most infectious.

The UKHSA has also published public health guidance on [living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#).

Who can still test?

As individuals are now mixing in an open society, regular testing within a setting is no longer as effective as it once was. Instead, the most effective protection against severe disease from COVID-19 for everyone, including those at higher risk from COVID-19, is to get vaccinated.

People at risk of serious illness from COVID-19 will continue to get free tests to use if they develop symptoms, along with NHS and adult social care staff and those in other high-risk settings. Local Health Protection Teams (HPT) may implement outbreak testing for specific settings at their discretion.

Public health guidance on the actions [people with symptoms of a respiratory infection](#) should take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others is available.

Vaccines remain our best weapon against this virus. By getting vaccinated, children, young people and staff can increase their protection against COVID-19.

Resources, including immunisation guidance are available for parents and young people, which can be found [here](#).

What measures should schools be taking to stop the spread?

As well as following the UKHSA guidance, all settings should have in place baseline infection prevention and control measures that will help to manage the spread of infection:

- Reinforcing good hygiene practices such as regular hand washing and cleaning.
- Ensuring occupied spaces are well-ventilated and let fresh air in.
- Ensuring all eligible groups are enabled and supported to take up the [offer of national vaccination programmes including COVID-19 and flu](#)

APPENDIX 3 - ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Reason
	Present:
/ \	Present at registration: / = am. \ = pm
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
	Absent: Authorised absence from school
C	Leave granted by the school (specific set of circumstances)
H	Leave granted for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
	Unauthorised absence from school
G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
	Attending an approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
B	Off-site educational activity
J	At an interview with prospective employers or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity (activity has been approved by the school)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	work experience
	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (school related)
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

For a full explanation of the codes used, please follow the Gov.uk link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> 'Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities Published: May 2022 Applies from: September 2022'

APPENDIX 4 - PENALTY NOTICES

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and can be issued when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent of 5 days consecutive or otherwise) over two consecutive half terms. A separate Penalty Notice can be issued for each parent/carer per child. Parents/carers have to pay a fine but they do not have to appear in Court. Parents/carers also have to make sure that their child's attendance at school improves. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents/carers to discharge potential liability for conviction.

Is a warning given?

The school will send you a formal letter of warning telling you that a Penalty Notice may be issued. This warning letter will also include details of your child's absences. If you receive a warning letter, this is an opportunity for you to work with the school to improve your child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a Penalty Notice.

Your child must have no further unauthorised absences from school from the date of the letter. If your child's unauthorised absence continues and reaches 10 sessions (5 school days) or more, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning may be issued. This depends on each individual case. However, the school is not required to send a warning letter where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.

What are the costs?

£60 if you pay within 21 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice or £120 if you pay after this but within 28 days (per parent, per child).

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against a Penalty Notice.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay in full within 28 days, Bury Council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child. If proven, this can attract a range of fines up to £1,000 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences, depending on individual circumstances.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. A prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending on your circumstances. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. If the poor school attendance persists, the Local Authority may also consider prosecution under Section

444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, which can carry a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to three months' imprisonment.

What can I do?

Ensure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and for your child. Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school. If you suspect your child is not happy in school, you should contact the school as soon as possible. Take an interest in your child's education, ask about their day, praise and encourage achievements at school.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

If you are experiencing problems with your child's attendance at school, it is really important that you work closely with school to resolve the matter. Further support is also available from the Local Authority website:

<https://www.bury.gov.uk/>

QR Code:



APPENDIX 5 - EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT (EIA)

Name of person completing the EIA:	
Role of person completing the EIA:	
Date EIA completed:	

Please note, **you do not need to identify impacts for all categories**, just those that are applicable.

Policy or Process Information		
Name of policy or process:	Attendance Policy	
Purpose and intended aim of the policy or process (use policy or trip/event name)		
Name of person responsible for the policy or process and its review:	Mr S Battye: Asst. Headteacher - Behaviour & Safeguarding	
Protected Characteristic	Negative Impact Identified	Explanation Of Impact Analysis and Any Concessions Made
Age:		
Disability:		
Sex:		
Gender reassignment: S.7 Equality Act 2010. Where a person is proposing, is undergoing, or has undergone, a process (or part of) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex. No longer a requirement to be under medical supervision.		
Ethnicity:		
Religion or belief:		
Sexual orientation:		
Marriage or civil partnership:		
Pregnancy and maternity:		
Carers/caring responsibilities		

Socio economic status		
Other factors to be considered, e.g. contract type, grade		

Date EIA recommended to responsible body with proposed policy or plans (e.g. EV lead, HT, LGB) Please note: ratification will occur at the same time a trip is approved or policy is adopted.	14.02.2023
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