

# Burstow Primary School

## Attendance Policy



Policy Editor	Attendance Officer Headteacher	Review Period	Annual
Responsible for review	Full Governing Body	Term Approved	Spring 2022
Status	Statutory	Term Review Date	Spring 2023

The staff of Burstow School are committed to developing a sound partnership with the Local Authority, parents, pupils, Governors, and others, to build a school which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

Regular attendance to schools means children can reach their full potential and have their full foundation of learning without gaps; which causes tremendous difficulties at secondary school and success in the future. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care value school and come to school every day and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

## **Expectations**

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school every day, unless ill.
- attend school punctually (8:30am arrival).
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

### **We expect that all parents/carers that have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:**

- ensure their child attends school every day and be aware of their legal responsibilities for their child to access their full entitlement of **190 days** of school and take holidays during the **175 home days** of the year.
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and dressed in correct school uniform and shoes and PE kit, etc.
- discuss with their Class Teacher, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Attendance Officer or Headteacher any problems preventing them from attending school and seek solutions together.
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school by 9:30am either via the app 'Study Bugs' email or by phone to explain the absence.
- contact the school whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- only collect a child early from school on rare occasions where no other option is available.
- Sign up to the school communication app 'Study Bugs' and use it to inform us of any absence.
- try to book dental and doctor appointments outside of school hours.

### **We expect that school staff will:**

- be proud of children for being prepared and looking smart.
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, twice daily.
- monitor all pupils' attendance and take action where concerns arise.
- contact parents/carers on first day of child's absence, when no message has been received to explain the absence. If the inability to contact parents, may mean the school has welfare concerns the school may take the decision to call social services.
- celebrate good attendance.
- regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all pupils.
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, to express their concern and to find what the problem is and find solutions.
- refer on-going irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service.
- provide a safe and interesting learning environment.

- Build trusting and nurturing working relationships with children and their families.
- Ensure attendance system to celebrate weekly class attendance is displayed and kept up to date.
- Ensure attendance 'raffle' for children attending 100% each week are entered into the termly raffle.

## **Leave of Absence**

The Headteacher, on behalf of the Governors, can authorise leave only in exceptional circumstances, at their discretion. Parents are urged to arrange to talk to the Headteacher at their earliest convenience to discuss their situation, if they are facing this problem.

**No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.**

**When considering whether to grant a leave of absence the Headteacher will:**

- look at the child's record of attendance (children with poor attendance records may not be authorised leave of absence due to detrimental effects on their education).
- look to see that the absence does not exceed the maximum of ten school days in any one year (unless it is an exceptional circumstance).
- look at the time of the absence, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any important or statutory examinations/assessments.

The school holiday dates are published in a realistic time frame (usually at least one year in advance) and parents are asked to check this before committing to an event which requires time out of school.

## **HOLIDAYS IN SCHOOL TIME WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED.**

Parents/carers must complete an 'application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances form' to request approval for any leave of absence. The forms can be obtained from the school office or via our school website - Appendix A of this policy. Parents/Carers are advised to speak with the Headteacher to explain their circumstances in detail.

Where leave is not authorised, but the child is removed from school anyway, the school will classify the absence as 'unauthorised' in the official register.

Cases of persistent unauthorised absence will be reported to the Local Authority (LA) who may issue a Penalty Notice.

In the event of a holiday taken in term time during KS2 SATS, usually in May, the Headteacher will immediately request the LA to issue a Penalty Notice.

## **Penalty Notices**

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £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 within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### **Punctuality/Lateness**

Punctuality to school is crucial as learning tasks begin at 8:30am and registration is at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that child's learning and to that of the other students in the class and causes unnecessary anxiety for him or her child. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time.

The blue gates are opened at 8.30am and closed again at 8:45am.

Registration takes place at 8.45am and pupils who arrive after this time will be recorded as late to school.

Any child arriving after 9:30am is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness by a pupil will be addressed by the Class Teacher in the first instance with parents and possibly through the School Attendance Officer and Senior Leadership Team and may be referred to Inclusion service if lateness continues.

Parents are required to come to the office if their child is late to sign them into school. The onus is not on the child to explain the reason for the lateness. Any child who comes alone to the office late, will have a follow-up call to parents to find out what happened to cause their lateness. The Inclusion Officer from Surrey County Council will regularly be present on-site to ask parents why they are late and follow-up where necessary.

## Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school they inform Burstow School staff in writing using the 'in year application form' as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from Burstow school roll until the following information has been received in writing via the 'in year application form' and investigated:-

- the reason for changing school.
- the date the pupil will be leaving Burstow School.
- the address of the new school if it is known.
- the new home address, if it is appropriate.
- contact has been made by the receiving school.

The pupil's school records will then be sent electronically to the new school as soon as possible. The school file will be sent to the new school with a return reply slip so that receipt of the records can be acknowledged.

In the event that the school staff have not been informed of the above information and no contact is made from the receiving school the family will be referred to the local authority Inclusion Service/ Traveller Education Service.

**The above information does not apply to children transferring to secondary schools at the normal transition stage. Due to the number of children transferring at this time a Common Transfer File to all secondary schools concerned is done electronically. In most cases the school file is delivered to the receiving school in person, by a member of staff before the end of the Summer Term. Once the files are delivered it is up to the receiving school to chase non attendees at the start of the next academic year.**

## Encouraging Attendance

Burstow School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- by making the curriculum relevant, fun and broad.
- by completing accurate and punctual registers during morning and afternoon registration. The registers are now done electronically by the teacher in the class. (Any amendments to the registers will be made by office staff).
  - Registers open at 8.30am.
  - Any arrivals after 8:45am will be marked L for late. If pupils arrive after 9:30am the lateness will be recorded U for Unauthorised.
  - The Courts have the power to call as a witness the person who took the register. (e.g. Child Protection issues - why was the child missing from school for no reason?) **(Appendix B for list of all attendance codes)**
- by awarding certificates to celebrate good and improved attendance.
- termly family raffle prizes and certificates are awarded to children for 100% attendance both weekly, termly and yearly.
- mufti days are awarded to a class for best attendance during a half term.
- attendance figures are shown weekly on each classroom door.
- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance and lateness, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance or lateness continues.
- making children proud of themselves to come to school.

- our Family Liaison Officer can meet with parents to support them through difficult and challenging times to ensure children still attend school even when times are hard.
- attendance data is celebrated in a bright graph and short synopsis in the monthly school newsletter.

## Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- on the first day of absence, if no communication or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.30am the school will endeavour to contact the family by text message. If the family do not respond the school office will endeavour to contact them by phone. Absences will be marked as an 'N' until a reason is given. If no reason is given it will be changed to unauthorised (O) and the office will continue to try to make contact with the family.
- After 1 day of not being able to make contact with the parent/carer, the LA inclusion team will be alerted.
- The school should tell parents that if persistence or sibling absences are recorded a referral will be made to the LA inclusion team.
- Parents/carers should be made aware that failure to comply with the expectations set by the LA inclusion team may result in further action, i.e. prosecution.
- Meet with families to see what we can do to help find solutions to improve attendance, case-by-case.
- Responding to families who need to travel for work for the travelling community - see Appendix C for detail.

Burstow School hold regular attendance panels in conjunction with the LA inclusion team; any parents/carers whose children are identified as a cause for concern will be invited to attend. If there is no improvement in school attendance Burstow will make a referral to the LA inclusion team who work in partnership with school and parents/carers in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

The Inclusion Service may also issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's' regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Inclusion Service. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents/carers will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

## School Organisation

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must hold the underlying principles to value attendance as a high priority and important part of being successful and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education and the positive effect it brings to path of their adult life.

**In addition to this, there are the following specific responsibilities of the Headteacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:**

- adopt the whole policy and create an ethos to underpin it.
- initiate contact with parents in cases of unexplained absence and lateness before referring to the Inclusion Service, unless there is justifiable cause for concern in which case immediate referral to the Inclusion Service may be necessary.
- ensure that key staff have the opportunity for liaison and follow-up work with the LA inclusion team.
- consult and liaise closely with the LA inclusion team on a regular basis and take responsibility to ensure appropriate referrals are identified and instigated without delay.
- to work in close collaboration with the LA inclusion team during their fortnightly register analysis.
- identify particular individuals whose absences cause concern and plan actions to find barriers and solutions to them.
- track pupils' attendance.
- monitor and evaluate improvements.
- identify the main causes of absence within the school and take action to address and improve those areas.
- congratulate good attendance at assemblies with awards etc.
- Find out through pupil voice how we can make the curriculum fun and school enticing.

**Class Teachers are responsible for:**

- Making school fun, relevant and experiential.
- to complete registers accurately and punctually twice daily electronically.
- to follow up any unexplained non-attendance or regular absences with parent/carer.
- to follow up regular late pupils with parent/carer.
- to inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of their concerns.
- to be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to put in appropriate actions to counteract this.
- ensure that any children who are of concern are targeted to ensure they catch-up on the learning they have missed.
- arrange meetings with parents of children whom are absent or late a lot.
- talk about coming to school as a positive, good thing to do and welcome children to feel they belong here.

## Appendix A

### Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Name of child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for	
from:	to:
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:	
Evidence for request attached? YES / NO	
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:	
I also have children at...	
Where are you travelling to? Please <u>state exact country</u>	
<p><b>I sign below to confirm that I will follow the full COVID-19 guidance of the country I am visiting (subject to change) and the full COVID-19 guidance on my return to the UK.</b></p> <p><b>I understand that if I break the current UK guidance and return my child(ren) to Burstow Primary School without due care, the school may require me to take further required actions.</b></p>	
Full name:	
Signature:	
Relationship to the above named child(ren)	
Date:	



<b>To be completed by the Headteacher</b>		
Child's attendance level over the last 12 months:		
Our overall school target for attendance this year is		%
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved		The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Explanatory notes:		
Signed:		Date:
(Headteacher)		

### **PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE CAREFULLY**

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that 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 is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit evidence of reason for request with this form if you would like the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.

**Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.**

Penalty Notices are issued and collected by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy, available on the school's website.

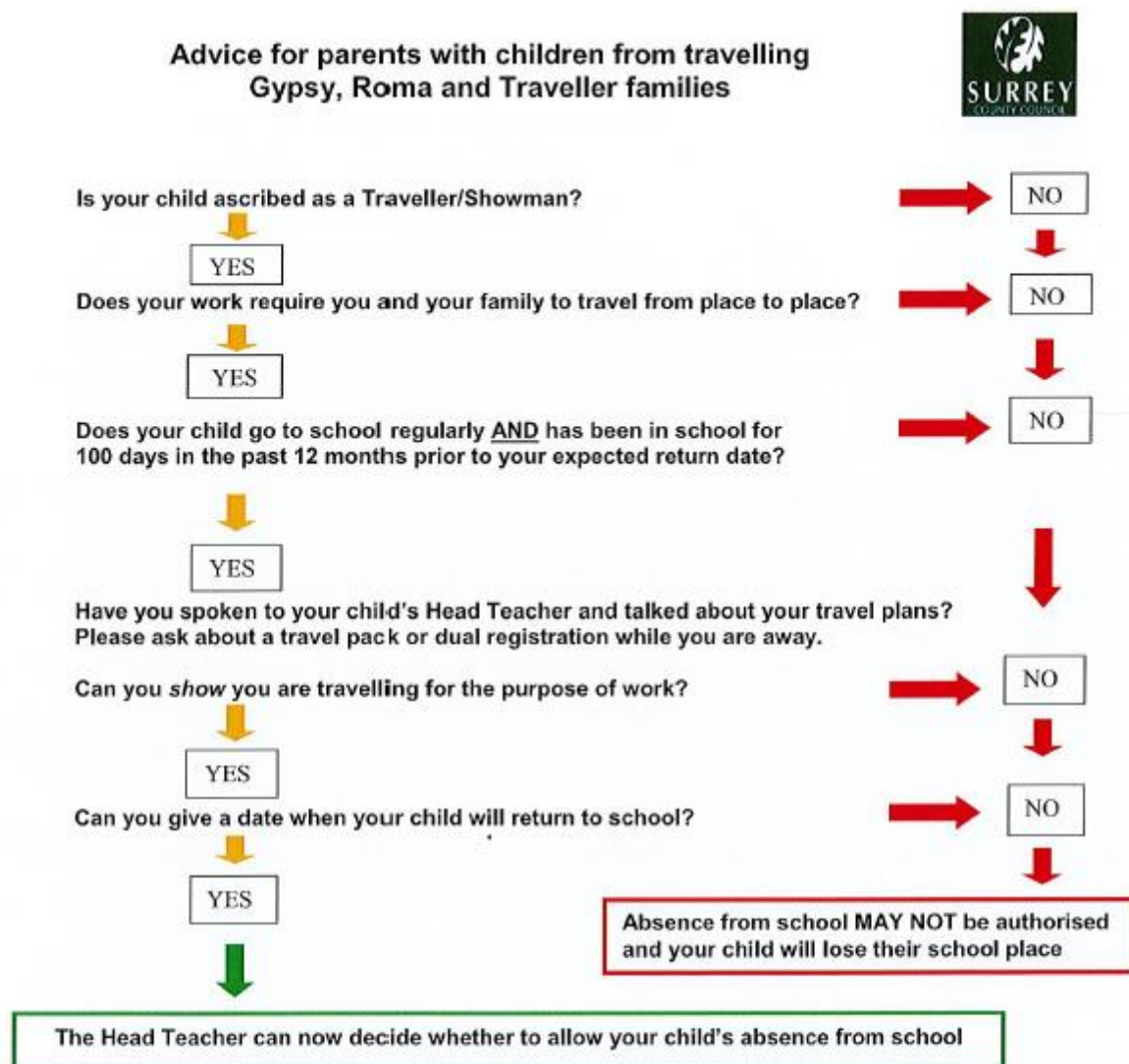
## Appendix B

### Attendance Codes

Attendance Codes		
Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
@	Do not use	Unauthorised Absence
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	Approved Educational Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration	Approved Educational Activity
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	DfES #: School closed to pupils	Attendance not required
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required
Z	Do not use	Attendance not required
!	DfES X: Non-compulsory school age abs	Attendance not required
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required
*	DfES Z: Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark

## Appendix C

### Advice for parents with children from travelling Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families



#### Frequently asked questions

##### **Can I take my child out of school to visit relatives, attend weddings, funerals or go on holiday?**

Permission needs to be given by the Head Teacher, who can only authorise this for exceptional circumstances. If absence is not authorised you may be issued with a penalty notice.

##### **I don't know when I will be back so I cannot give a return date.**

Choose a realistic date and stay in touch with school while you are away and tell them if your plans change. If you do not call school to tell them of any changes to your travel plans then your child could lose their school place.

##### **What happens if I go away without following this advice?**

If you go travelling and have not spoken to the head teacher about your plans then you could lose your child's school place after 20 days or get a fine.

If you need further advice please speak to your child's school or REMA Traveller Support 01483 517831

## Appendix D

### COVID19 Appendum - January 2021

(should it be required in the future)

#### Remote learning at home during lockdown

- All teachers will keep an accurate register of those children who attend live lessons during zoom and find out what the difficulties are for any children who do not attend and address them, so that all children can access live learning sessions over the week (appropriate to their needs, age and pace of learning).
- All children will attend their allocated live learning sessions. If they are experiencing difficulty with this, they and/or their parents should let their teacher know as soon as possible, so that provision can be adapted accordingly.
- The Leadership Team will gather attendance data regularly to monitor pupil engagement and explore with teachers any tweaks or trends that may need to be addressed.

#### In school provision for critical workers children, SEND and vulnerable children

- Identified vulnerable children must attend their agreed sessions and notify school by 9:30am for their reason for absence if they are not able to attend.
- Children with an EHCP must attend their agreed sessions and notify school by 9:30am for their reason for absence if they are not able to attend.