



## **Burnhope Primary Attendance Policy**

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Regular school attendance is vital. If children are not present at school they cannot be educated. Irregular attendance leads to educational disadvantages and a poor attendance pattern established in early life can become difficult to break as the child grows older.

Our task is to ensure we know why children are not at school and make sure parents as well as children know that we follow up absences and incidents of late arrival.

#### **Parental Responsibility**

Parents of children of a compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive full time education. Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school. It is the responsibility of school to support attendance in a very positive and high profile way and to take seriously problems that may lead to non-school attendance. Parents of pupils at our school are encouraged to see themselves as partners, working with us, building up good habits and positive attitudes towards school attendance, which will reap benefits in later school life. There is also a need to promote punctuality.

#### **Aims**

We aim to encourage all pupils to achieve maximum attendance in school in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in school.

We achieve this by:

1. providing a meaningful, caring educational environment where the child feels respected as an individual and an important part of the school community.
2. developing good relationships with parents and pupils and making sure parents in particular are aware of our requirements
3. maintaining an accurate registration system used consistently in school

4. encouraging and rewarding good attendance
5. utilising the skills of our School Attendance Officer

### **Attendance Procedures**

#### **On the first day off and any further absences**

If a child is ill or absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone or text home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

#### **Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them.

**If school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in the School Attendance Officer becoming involved and further action such as a referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence during term time).**

#### **If your child is absent from school more than they should be:**

School use its computer system to analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families may receive letters or be visited by the School Attendance Officer if their child's attendance is lower than it should be (if no prior discussion has taken place and/or this is due to frequent hospital appointments or a long term medical condition).

### **Help and Support**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you talk to school about the issues as soon as possible. You may need to attend a meeting in school to talk about the problems and to put a plan in place to help. Sometimes, schools may need to involve other services to help. Our school attendance officer is Mrs Lesley Sabourn

## Communication

School will always try to communicate with you regarding your child's attendance if it declines. School and the School Attendance Officer will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve the situation.

## Enforcement Action

If, following the school's attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or you have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation the school are required to consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action.

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Headteacher authorises absences. If your child misses school a lot because of illness, or if school do not know of any serious health issue that would mean your child could miss school a lot, **school may ask you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.**

## Punctuality

Registration time is 8:55 am. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If your child is significantly late regularly they may be marked with an unauthorised late code.

### **If lateness becomes persistent**

The School Attendance Officer may become involved and a home visit or meeting may be arranged to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

### **If school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality**

A referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

## Leave of Absence during Term Time

Headteachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances.** School will consider each request of absence individually taking into account circumstances, such as, the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at the time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days to be authorised. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent Department for Education guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of the circumstances.

**Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.**

### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

In order to promote attendance and punctuality in school, school hold weekly attendance rewards, a class reward half termly, and 100% attendance awards termly. Registration certificates also go out to parents half termly and with school reports.

### **Children missing education**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, school can legally remove your child from the school roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absences. It is **vital that you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are unknown.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and school are unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

**Policy reviewed June 2020**