

Attendance Policy

Introduction

- **THIS DOCUMENT IS** a statement of the aims, principles and strategies used for dealing with attendance at Bushy Hill Junior School.
- **THIS POLICY WAS REVIEWED** in Summer 2016
- **THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED** in Summer 2018

The school staff, alongside the LA, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.
- Be fit and well when they come to school.
- Leave school at 3.15 pm, unless attending an on-site after school activity or After School Club.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children are unable to attend school.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence, by phone or email and continue to keep the school updated on when they are expected to return.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- Discuss promptly with their Class Teacher or Headteacher any problems that deter them from attending school.

We expect that school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily.
- Monitor every pupil's attendance.
- Contact parents as soon as possible, on the first day of absence, when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain reasons authorising the absence.
- Encourage good attendance.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns.
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service.

- Meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention - The Rights Of The Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

Holidays

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Please be advised that parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time.

Encouraging Attendance

Bushy Hill Junior School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils.
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. The register will be amended to include a child who has arrived late.
- By monitoring attendance statistics.
- By celebrating good attendance with individual and group awards.
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary to provide support with strategies for improving their child's attendance.
- Referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding to Non-Attendance

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

- On the initial day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received the school will endeavour to contact parents/carers that day.
- If there is no response by the end of the day the school will contact parents/carers to invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school will tell parents/carers that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- The new home address, if it is known.

In all instances, a pupil will not be removed from this school roll until there has been confirmation that the child has started at his or her new school. If this cannot be confirmed, the Headteacher will immediately refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer for investigation.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carers 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 but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted.

Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.

Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. 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.

Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

Schools may also request the issue of a penalty notice where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the half-term (this can include late arrival after the close of registration where the U symbol has been used denoting unauthorised absence). The lateness will be recorded in accordance with the 'Registration and Lateness' section of this policy.

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

Further guidance can be found at:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/d/draft%20advice%20on%20school%20attendance.pdf>