



Burscough Priory Academy
www.burscoughprioryacademy.org
Headteacher Mrs L MacLaren

Ref: 3510 LMA

05 July 2024

Dear Parent,

You may well have seen some information in the media about changes to the rules for schools about school attendance. Before the new academic year, we wanted to take the opportunity to highlight these and give you some information.

Here is some context. At the moment, in the UK, attendance at all schools is at the lowest point since the pandemic and in a generation for a range of reasons. Nationally, the rate of attendance in secondary schools is 90% and at Burscough we are either on, around or just underneath this on a weekly basis. This means in our school and across the country, 10% of young people are not in school every day – over five years, for a child, this adds up to missing half a year of their secondary education.

Every moment in school counts and days missed add up quickly. Evidence shows that pupils who have good [attendance](#) enjoy better wellbeing and school performance than those who don't. In all senses, the single biggest factor in achievement at school is good attendance. Our GCSE performance data for the last three years aligns with this – the higher the rate of attendance, the higher the progress made, irrespective of starting point.

So, over the coming weeks you will get more information from us about attendance and our revised communications and procedures. This is all with the intention of making sure that parents and students know their rate of attendance and to ensure the highest rates of attendance and can maximise every opportunity in school.

Attached to this letter is a summary of the key changes that will be statutory in the UK from August 2024 – these are from the Department for Education. A lot of the emphasis has been placed on the changes to the fining system and prosecution. Working together in partnership gets the best results and we will continue to do this, with the fines and legal action as the last resort.

In the coming week, you will also receive a letter outlining your child's attendance and attached to this will be the SOL diamond and information about SOL. This is the means by which we will be tracking individual attendance.

As always, we look forward to your full support and maximising the opportunities that our young people have.

E Pluribus Unum.

Yours faithfully,

L MacLaren

Mrs MacLaren
Headteacher



An Endeavour Learning Trust School
Registered in England
Company Registration Number 7848372
VAT Registration Number 125718416

01704 893 259
✉ enquiries@burscoughprioryacademy.org
📍 Trevor Road, Burscough, Lancashire, L40 7RZ



Burscough Priory Academy
www.burscoughprioryacademy.org
Headteacher Mrs L MacLaren

National Attendance Summary – August 2024

This is the source information of this summary is [Working Together to Improve School Attendance - 19.8.24](#)

There are only a few circumstances where a child is allowed to miss [school](#), such as illness or where the school has given permission because of an exceptional circumstance. However, if your child misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene and you may be issued a fine.

1. What if my child needs to miss school?

Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet.
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school.

It is important to acknowledge that children with long-term medical or more serious mental health conditions, and those with [special educational needs and disabilities](#) may face additional barriers.

For children who face complex barriers to attendance, schools should have sensitive conversations with children and families and work with them to put support in place for their individual needs.

2. How much could I be fined if my child misses school?

In the majority of cases, schools and local authorities will try and provide support to help you improve your child's attendance first, but if this isn't effective or the absence is for unauthorised term time holiday, parents may face paying a fine. Currently, it's the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents, meaning the process varies from council to council.

However, under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons:

- From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**. This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.
- In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.



An Endeavour Learning Trust School
Registered in England
Company Registration Number 7848372
VAT Registration Number 125718416

01704 893 259
✉ enquiries@burscoughprioryacademy.org
📍 Trevor Road, Burscough, Lancashire, L40 7RZ



Burscough Priory Academy
www.burscoughprioryacademy.org
Headteacher Mrs L MacLaren

- Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.
- If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

3. How can you be sure parent fines are fair?

Fines are a last resort, and parents will be offered support to help improve their child's attendance first. The vast majority of fines for unauthorised absence (89%) are issued for term time holidays.

If your child is facing barriers to school attendance due to special education needs or disabilities (SEND), schools, local authorities and wider services are required to work together to provide the right support in the first place.

4. What happens if my child misses school without a good reason?

If your child is absent and you haven't received advance permission from the headteacher to take your child out of school, the school and local council may take action. Before that, your child's school and your local council are expected to support you to improve the child's attendance before any measures are put in place. These measures can include:

- **Issue a fixed penalty notice, otherwise known as a 'fine'** – your local council can give each parent a fine. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.
- **Seek an Education Supervision Order from the family court** – if the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of, or as well as, prosecuting you.
- **Prosecute you** – this means you have to go to court. You could get a fine, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order.



An Endeavour Learning Trust School
Registered in England
Company Registration Number 7848372
VAT Registration Number 125718416

01704 893 259
enquiries@burscoughprioryacademy.org
Trevor Road, Burscough, Lancashire, L40 7RZ