

BURTON BOROUGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Policy Reviewer	Ben Morgan	Date of Review	September 2020
Date Presented to Governors	28 th September 2020	Date of nextReview	January 2022

Abbreviations that will be found in this document:-

SM	School Manager
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
CLL	Community Learning Lesson
ASM	Assistant School Manager
PSD	Personal Study Diary
DFE	Department for Education

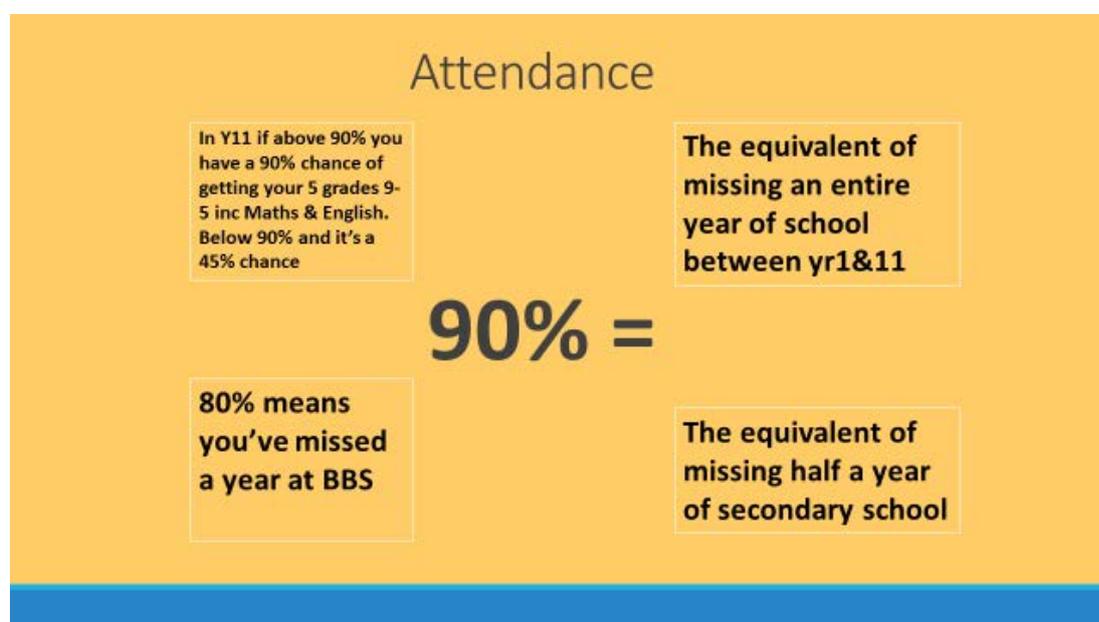
Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important

We show the following slide to students regularly because it highlights the effect of missing education. Our aim is to achieve 97%+ attendance and whilst we understand that there may be mitigating circumstances for non-attendance, it is vital that 97% becomes a minimum aspiration for all students.



The Law

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

To help us all to focus on this we will

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school and what their attendance and punctuality rate is;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance by giving Reward Points for full weekly attendance and sending a letter home for 100% attendance every term;
- Run promotional events when parents, staff and students can work together to raise attendance levels across the school.

The Law relating to Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Law relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Parents and carers must notify the school by phone on the first day of absence or it will be followed up.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless by prior agreement. Agreement for such absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic tutoring.

Absence Procedures

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

Leave of absence requests

Unless there are special circumstances, the school will not authorise 'Leave of absence' during term time. All leave of absence applications must be made prior to the leave of absence. If a parent takes their child on holiday in term time without the Principal's permission and a child fails to return from holiday within ten school days of the expected agreed date of return, the Principal has the right to remove the students from the school roll. As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, unauthorised holidays may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days (correct at time of policy 2015). Failure to pay this fine within 28 days will lead to court proceedings.

Staff roles and responsibilities

There are several staff who have a role in the schools attendance policy and some of their key responsibilities are highlighted below.

Role of the Principal and Governors

- Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented
- Complete attendance figures for the Local Authority and (Department for Education) DFE

Role of the Vice Principal

- Advise on and implement whole-school strategies for improving attendance
- Oversee the monitoring of attendance data to identify patterns set targets, support and inform policy and practice.
- Early intervention to support students whose attendance is causing concern.
- Hold regular meetings with Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- Liaise with School Manager.
- Monitor whole-school attendance schemes and rewards.
- Ensure that relevant staff are trained and supported in procedures that relate to attendance.
- Support when meeting with parents when necessary.

Role of School Manager

- Work with Assistant School Managers (ASM) and form tutors to identify and take action if there is concern about individual attendance.
- Ensure that Form tutors keep registers up-to-date.
- With ASM, meet with parents if there are attendance concerns.
- To ensure that students who are absent for an extended period of time will have appropriate work sent home and are reintegrated positively on their return.

- To meet regularly with EWO, Attendance Officer going through students identified with concerns about attendance.
- Take action as agreed at these meetings which may involve sending a letter to parents or phoning them to share concerns.

Role of Form Tutor

- As the first point of contact with students, tutors are crucial in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Tutors will register every morning in Period 1 (Community Learning Lesson) CLL.
- Watch out for patterns in a student's attendance/punctuality.
- Investigate all absences and ensure a note is received from parents.
- Report to SM any concerns about attendance or punctuality.

Role of parent/carer

- Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Parents/Carers should avoid, if possible, non-emergency medical or dental appointments during the school day.
- Parents/Carers do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.
- Parents/Carers should contact school on the first day of absence and indicate expected day of return.
- Only the school, within the context of the law, can authorise absence. The fact that a parent has offered a note in relation to the particular absence does not oblige the school to accept the reason for absence.
- Parents/Carers will be kept informed of any attendance concerns.
- Parents/Carers will attend meetings if there are concerns about their child's attendance.
- Parents/Carers who fail to fulfil their responsibility can expect legal action. This may include Penalty Notices/Fast Track to Prosecution/Parenting Orders.

Role of students

- All students are expected to be at school by 8.40 appropriately prepared for the day.
- At 8.50 students should be in their tutor room ready for Community Learning Lesson (CLL).
- Students who arrive after 8.45 will be given a 'LATE' stamp in their Personal Study Diaries (PSDs)
- Students are expected to remain in school all day and are not allowed off-site without permission.
- Poor punctuality is unacceptable at the start of the day or to any lesson, since students miss valuable learning and it disrupts teaching.
- Truancy is unacceptable and we take it very seriously. Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity and loss of social time or an afterschool Community Service of one hour will be arranged.

Role of Attendance Officer

- Telephone parents of students on first day of absence.
- Focus on the attendance of vulnerable students.
- Liaise daily with SMs and EWO.
- Have an oversight of modified timetables, COOS, etc
- Contact members of staff who fail to take their register.
- Amend registers as required.
- Provide attendance data for VICE PRINCIPAL, EWO etc.

Role of Education Welfare Officer

- To provide advice and guidance on policies and Government initiatives regarding students attendance
- To work with Attendance Officer, SM and Vice Principal to follow up poor attendance.
- To meet regularly with SMs to monitor attendance of students causing concern.
- To meet as and when necessary with SM/HoS and parents of students identified as needing support to improve attendance.
- To make home visits and maintain contact between parents, school and other external agencies.
- To liaise with Vice Principal to pursue prosecution of parents for their child's poor attendance.

Covid addendum

- The school will communicate any changes to attendance coding and expectancies on attendance as and when Government guidance is released.
- Currently, all students are expected to be in school unless shielding under the COVID guidance.