



Attendance Policy

Joint Policy with Buttsbury Infant School

Maximum Effort for Maximum Achievement

Attendance Policy

The schools actively encourage regular attendance. Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage.

Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school. It is the schools' responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family **chooses** to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).

If leave of absence is **taken without the request having been agreed**, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Communication

At the induction meetings for children about to join the school, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. At this initial meeting parents are asked to arrange their family holidays within school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. The school's policy relating to authorisation of holidays is also communicated to parents.

When children join our school at other times of the year, the importance of regular attendance is discussed with parents.

Attendance Registers

These are required in law to be called twice a day; once at the commencement of the morning session and once at the commencement of the afternoon session. The registers are closed at 9.10 am.

Absence

All parents are asked to contact the school by 9.30 am if their child is absent. If no notification is received about a child's absence, then a member of the School's Administration Team will phone the child's parents by 10 o'clock to establish the reason for the absence.

Punctuality

It is important that children arrive for school punctually to ensure a calm and purposeful start to the day. Where pupils arrive late for school [after the register has closed] this will be marked as unauthorised absence for that session, even though they may arrive later.

Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

If the school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness, the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments will be authorised where confirmation has been received from the parents [either in person, telephone call or writing].

Attendance Incentives

- Children with 100% will receive a certificate (Buttsbury Junior School)
- The class with the best attendance each half term will receive a picnic basket. (Buttsbury Infant School)
- Children with 100% attendance through the whole school year will receive a certificate and a medal at Buttsbury Junior School.
- At Buttsbury Junior School children who maintain 100% attendance for their whole time at the school will receive a special award.
- At Buttsbury Infant School, the class with the best yearly attendance will receive a special award.

Special Consideration

Consideration will be given to how pupils with long-term diagnosed medical conditions/disabilities will be praised for maintaining relatively high attendance levels despite the challenges that they face as individuals.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is monitored initially by a member of the schools admin team. The headteacher oversees the monitoring process and meets regularly with the Billericay Community Trust Home School Attendance Officer.

Any issues identified concerning absence, illness or lateness will be addressed by the Home School Attendance Officer by letter, telephone or meeting with strategies put in place to improve attendance.

The Billericay Community Trust Home School Attendance Officer may refer a pupil to the Local Authority where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The Local Authority will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken, by the Local Authority, against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

Leave of Absence

Schools can only agree to absence if they believe there are exceptional circumstances which warrant it, e.g. attendance at a close relative's funeral, which should be clearly demonstrated in a letter accompanying the leave of absence request form.

Applications for leave of absence should ordinarily be made no less than four weeks before the first day of absence.

As from 1st October 2017 a penalty notice will be issued on the basis of six unauthorised absences due to a holiday taken during the first two weeks of September.

Flexi Schooling

The Headteacher and Governing Body of Buttsbury Infant School **will not** consider requests for flexi schooling.

Monitoring and Review

Policy Date: Spring 2020

Review Date: Spring 2021