



# **Buckstones Community Primary School**

## **Policy for Attendance**

**Written and agreed by staff: 3<sup>rd</sup>. September 2024**  
**Adopted by Governors: November 2024**  
**Review: September 2027**

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### **1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regard to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

1. Promoting good attendance
2. Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
3. Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
4. Acting early to address patterns of absence
5. Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
6. We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the **working together to improve school attendance** from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

1. Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
2. Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
3. Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
4. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
5. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### 3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties |
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

#### 3.3 The attendance support team

The school attendance support team is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**The attendance support team can be contacted via [info@buckstones.oldham.sch.uk](mailto:info@buckstones.oldham.sch.uk) or 0161 770 5850**

### 3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes
- submitting this information to the school office before 09:00 a.m. every morning from Monday to Friday.

### 3.5 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the head teacher/attendance lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Call the school/ use the absence function on ParentMail NOT TAPESTRY to report their child's absence before 08:45am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with a minimum of three (where possible) emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### 3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the day and again at the start of the afternoon

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment,
- The date on which the amendment was made in the comments

- The initials of the person who made the amendment

**See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.**

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:50 on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 09.00 and will be kept open until 09:30

**N.B. Pupils arriving between 09.00 and 09:30 are recorded as Late.**

#### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff on 0161 770 5850 or email: [info@buckstones.oldham.sch.uk](mailto:info@buckstones.oldham.sch.uk) or via the Parentmail App.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence, appointment requests/texts/email are NOT accepted as medical evidence as these are only parental requests for appointments not actual appointments. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents are to notify the school via

- email: [info@buckstones.oldham.sch.uk](mailto:info@buckstones.oldham.sch.uk) and attach a copy of the appointment
- by telephone 0161 770 58/50
- or come to the office with a copy of the appointment letter/text message etc.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Buckstones have an electronic signing in system. In order to synchronise our registers, parents who bring their children late to school must sign in on this system, giving a genuine reason for lateness. If a pupil is late five(+) times within a half term the parent/carer will receive a letter with the option to come into school to discuss the reasons and possible solutions.

If punctuality continues to be a barrier to pupils learning the parent/carer will be required to meet with the headteacher / School Governor

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained
- Attempt to contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school attendance support team will potentially visit the home.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and/or the police Invite parent/carer into school for an informal meeting
- Monitor attendance If there is no improvement in attendance then invite parent/carer to formal meeting with the headteacher/Education Welfare Officer
- Agree a parent/carer contract and monitor its impact
- Formal proceedings and penalty notice if there is no improvement
- If a child continues to have dropping attendance, absences will only be authorised with medical evidence see 4.2

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via a termly attendance report sent via ParentMail, if any issues arise within the term they will be dealt with as required

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Please note that all holidays taken in term time will be unauthorised. A leave of absence should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least six weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence via the request form, accessible via the school office. Please can we remind parents that we do not authorise any absences either

side of a holiday without medical evidence. As you will be aware, children are very honest (which we encourage as part of our school ethos) and will usually tell us on their return. Please consider the implications and be honest about time off.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to. As a general rule, ‘a day exclusively set apart for religious observance’ is a day when the pupil’s parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent’s religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school’s discretion as set out under Code C.
- Children who have modelling or acting auditions can take a maximum of ten sessions (five days) per academic year to attend. These must be accompanied by official documentation from the professional agency.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, the payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year. *Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. In these circumstances a Notice to Improve may be sent by the Local Authority on behalf of the school, this will stipulate the support that has already been implemented and the ongoing support that is available to the parent and child to improve school attendance. The Notice to Improve will also detail the expected improvements that must be made over a set time frame to prevent the Penalty Notice being issued.*
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission Leave of Absence (Holidays) *Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non- consecutive. In line with the National Framework, the Local Authority retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking multiple term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or*

*other family events, or a combination of non-attendance due to leave of absence and unauthorised absence.*

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Further information on the National Framework can be found within Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024.

The National Framework comes into effect from 19 August 2024, the penalty amounts are listed below

- First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

### 5.3 Fast Track To Attendance

Fast Track to Attendance is a time-focused approach to improve attendance. The aim of Fast Track is to promote early intervention by school and where necessary by the Local Authority. The aim is to ensure that rapid and appropriate action is taken to tackle absence problems as soon as they become apparent. Failure to make and sustain changes will result in the Local Authority prosecuting through the courts.

### 5.4 Educational Neglect

Following a prosecution for poor attendance, if there is no sustained improvement and a lack of engagement, school will notify you prior to completing a MASH referral to Children's Safeguarding Team under the 'Educational Neglect Policy'. This is in conjunction with Oldham Safeguarding Children's Partnership Protocol, a copy of which can be found on the school's website in the Policy section.

### 5.5 Children Missing Education

At Buckstones Primary School, we believe all children, regardless of their circumstances or background are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. Pupil absence will be followed up on a daily basis as a matter of priority. Every child who has a continuous period of absence of three days or more may be required to provide proof of absence. School will follow the Education Attendance Service process when a child has been absent for three or more days without reason, contact



will initially be via telephone, followed by a home visit and a letter. If after 10 school days no contact has been made, the school will complete the Child Missing Education (CME) form and forward the school's investigation to the Local Authority, who will then follow their procedures. After a period of 20 days and on completion of all safeguarding checks, a child will be removed from school roll. School follow Department for Education Statutory guidance.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

The school will celebrate good attendance and punctuality in its weekly assembly. **The class with the highest attendance each week will win an attendance trophy for the week.** Pupils with 100% attendance will receive recognition each half term via a badge from the Head teacher. Pupils with 100%+ attendance for the whole year will receive a certificate of recognition. Letters are sent home via Parentmail celebrating 98%- 100% attendance

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data every quarter-termly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- **Pupil-level absence data is shared with the DFE**
- The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- **Create partnerships with other local schools for the purpose of safeguarding siblings/family members.**

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance e.g. Early Help, Education Welfare Officer or MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

### **Data Protection (GDPR) – Managing and Storing Information**

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy.

All documents stored are in accordance with legal requirements where appropriate, and guidance from the Records Management Toolkit for Schools.

- a) All individual attendance records are kept confidentially and securely in SIMs and CPoms
- b) Any correspondence is attached to the pupils file.
- c) If a pupil transfers from the school the attendance records files will be sent to the next school as part of the transfer documents.
- d) All attendance registers for pupils will be retained until they leave the school and then securely disposed (documents must be shredded)
- e) All absence letters and penalty notices will be retained for their current year plus 2 years and then securely disposed (documents must be shredded)

<b>This policy: Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements</b>	<b>Has a High Level Of Data Compliance Requirements</b>
		<b>x</b>

To be reviewed every 3 years or when there are any Government changes.

## **Appendix 1: attendance codes**

Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

Code W: Attending work experience

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

Code D: Dual registered at another school

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code R: Religious observance

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole school closure