

Burton Bradstock CE VC Primary School **Attendance Policy**

Aim

1. Our aim is to ensure that, wherever possible, children are at school, on time, every day that the school is open.

Background

2. Regular attendance enhances pupil progress. In contrast, significant absence will undermine learning and regardless of ability or effort a pupil will fail to achieve expected progress. The national attendance target is 95%. The Dorset LA currently set a target of 95.2%. Attendance is defined as timely presence at sessions (each day consisting of a morning and an afternoon session) recorded in Class Registers. The school year is 190 days (380 sessions). An absence of 10 days in any given academic year equates to 5.2% and means a pupil will not attain minimum expected attendance.
3. The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended with effect from 1 September 2013 removed all reference to family holiday, extended leave and 10 school days absence threshold previously published.
4. A child's absence does not only hinder their own progress but can also require additional teacher time to explain work missed so that the child can catch up and understand later work. This may detract from the overall progress of the class and is the reason why the School's attendance statistics are carefully monitored by the Local Authority, the Department for Education and Ofsted. Poor attendance statistics may cause unfavourable judgements about the School in Ofsted inspections.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

5. The law requires that all schools must show the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence on the school register.
6. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an acceptable reason, such as illness, or any other unavoidable cause.
7. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been sought or granted. These may be absences where the parents keep the child out of school unnecessarily, absences which have never been properly explained, children who arrive at school too late to receive a mark in the register and truancy before or during the school day.

Procedures

8. Information for Parents/Carers.
 - a. Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in fit condition to learn.

- b. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents must notify the school as soon as possible by phone, e-mail or in person on the first day of absence. If a child is absent, and the school has not received any message regarding the absence, the school will attempt to contact the parents/carers of the child by telephone/e-mail/text by morning break as a way of ensuring that child's security.
- c. On the child's return to school then a letter detailing the reason for absence should be handed in. If the child has been absent without the parents/carers confirming the absence in writing then a note requesting a letter of explanation will be sent home.
- d. A pupil's absence from school will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.
- e. Attendance issues will be raised with parents through Parents' evenings, school prospectus, newsletter, bulletins and letter prior to commencing school.
- f. The headteacher will monitor the registers half termly. Attendance of below 85% will result in parents/carers being contacted to explain absence.
- g. If absences persist or if there is a continued concern, then the procedure set out in the Attendance Flowchart will be followed. This procedure is common across all Bridport schools and is supported by the Locality Team and County Solicitor (Appendix 1).
- h. The children are rewarded for good attendance, receiving certificates and class awards each half term.

9. Pupils.

- a. All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Lateness will be recorded in the register, but any child arriving later than 9.30am will be marked as an unauthorised absence (unless it might be authorised as in section 6 above and an acceptable explanation is provided by the parent). All late arrivals are required to report to the school office.

10. Governors.

- a. Attendance will be monitored by the People Committee and reported to the Full Governing Body.
- b. The school's policy will be ratified by the Governing Body. It will include the school's policy on punctuality and an explanation of hierarchy of actions the school takes in the event of absence.

Holidays in term time

- 11. The school is guided by the updated current legislation, namely The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. All previous references to holidays in term time and 10 day threshold have been removed. There is no right to remove a child from school for

reason of holiday. An absence can only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances' and the parent/carer must complete a 'Request for Leave of Absence from School' form. The regulations mean that:

Parents cannot demand a leave of absence as an automatic right.

Requests must be made in advance.

Schools cannot apply blanket policies to approve/reject all applications.

All requests must be considered on their own merits.

Extended periods of absence will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

12. The Head Teacher, on behalf of the Governing Body, will authorise/unauthorise a leave of absence.

13. Absence which has not been agreed in advance (refer to point 5) will lead to the pupil being marked with 'unauthorised absence'. Unauthorised absence could be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of Penalty Notice or other action as outlined in the attached Pyramid Attendance Flowchart. This may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of Penalty Notice or other action. Penalty Notice is currently £60 payable within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

Children missing education

14. As a school we have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of our pupils, and as part of this we investigate any unexplained absences, including if a pupil moves schools and we have not been advised of the school that the pupil is moving onto. In these cases we have a duty to inform the local authority. The school must also notify the local authority if a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register for whatever reason, e.g. a parent chooses to home educate.

Summary

15. The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents, to Dorset County Council, to Ofsted and the Department for Education and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child attends. Staff at Burton Bradstock Primary School are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Policy adopted by the Governing Body: Summer Term 2015

Next review: Summer term 2016