



# Attendance Policy

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Policy Produced by: P.Hillman



## **Background**

At Buckingham Primary Academy our mission is to ensure that our young people leave us as confident and adaptable learners who are imaginative, intelligent and independent, ready to be responsible, respectful and aspirational members of their community and the wider world.

Buckingham Primary Academy recognises the fact that regular attendance and academic success go hand in hand. Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. Attendance is clearly linked to achievement and attainment. Research shows that poor school attendance has a detrimental effect on future prospects and the future earning potential of our children. Poor attendance can also have a detrimental effect on our children's well-being and personal development, by making it difficult for them to make and keep friendships and to be included socially within the Academy.

Buckingham Primary Academy aims to actively promote attendance and to limit and discourage absence.

## **Aims**

- Enable our children to take the fullest advantage of the educational opportunities our Academy has to offer.
- Increase achievement and attainment levels
- Avoid disruption to learning
- Enable our children to grow and develop personally and socially
- Value high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Reduce levels of unauthorised absenteeism and lateness
- Reassure parents / carer and the wider community that good attendance is a priority issue for our Academy
- Ensure our children are safe, as children who are not in school may be at increased risk
- Work in partnership to overcome the barriers or perceived barriers to attendance
- Monitor our data effectively to identify those most at risk
- Prepare our children for the time-keeping discipline of adult life

## **Parents / Carers' Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that children of compulsory school age regularly attend their registered school. The Education Act 1966 clearly states, *'If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his or her parent/carer is guilty of an offence.'*

### **Parents / Carers are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that their child/children attend school regularly
- Ensuring that their child/children arrive at school on time
- Ensuring that they collect their child/children on time at the end of the day
- Informing the Academy of their child's/children's absence on the first day of non-attendance by 9.30am
- Informing the Academy of any changes to their contact details
- Informing the Academy if someone other than themselves will be picking up their child / children
- Keeping the Academy informed of anything that might affect the child/children's attendance or punctuality
- Ensuring that they work with the Academy if attendance becomes a problem
- Trying to get medical, dental and optician appointments before or after school hours.

## **Staying in touch**

Every child becomes unwell from time to time. If your child/children is/are absent, please ring the Academy before 9.30am to advise us of the reason for absence. If possible, please also state how long you anticipate your child/children will be absent.

We encourage parents/carers to try and make medical appointments – GPs and dental check-ups – after school or during school holidays. We recognise this is not always possible, therefore please ensure your child is only away from school for the minimum amount of time. Please bring your child into the Academy and collect them when appropriate, to allow time to travel to the appointment and return them to the Academy afterwards if possible. Evidence must be produced of the appointment either a letter, text message or appointment card.

## **Procedure if a child is absent**

- When a child is absent expectantly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and the Attendance Officer will be alerted, who will endeavour to contact a parent/carer. If you could inform the Academy of your child's/children's absence by 9.30am. This prevents the Attendance Officer or Office staff having to make numerous phone calls and provides reassurance of a child's safety in the event that parents/carers cannot be contacted by telephone, for any reason. Parents/carers should not use email or text messaging to inform us of a child's/children's absence.

- Evidence may be presented to the Attendance Officer or Office staff prior to the day of absence e.g. if a child has an unavoidable medical appointment.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the Attendance Officer or office staff will be in contact straight away with the parent/carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- If we are unable to contact you, we may, either:
  - Make a home visit and/or
  - Inform the Education Welfare Service
  - Contact the Police if we believe that the child may be at immediate risk

### **Requests for leave of absence for a child**

- We strongly believe at Buckingham Primary Academy that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible and do not miss crucial learning, which may put them at an educational disadvantage.
- Head teachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the leave of absence cannot be taken outside of term time. These circumstances must be detailed on the leave of absence form obtained from the Academy Office prior to the leave of absence, as retrospective consent cannot be given. Evidence in support of these circumstances must also be provided to the Academy when the leave of absence form is submitted – for example, a doctor’s or health professional’s certificate in support of a family crisis or a serious illness.
- Parents/carers have no statutory right to withdraw their child from the Academy for a family holiday. Children are required to attend school for 190 days in a school year, leaving 175 days of weekends and school holidays. Parents/carers should always endeavour to arrange family holidays when their child/children are not required to be in school.

### **Penalty Notices**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child’s/children’s regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents/Carers must now pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

To ensure the consistent application of the penalty notice provisions, penalty notices will ordinarily be issued when the following criteria are met:

- Where there are 10 sessions (5 school days) recorded as unauthorised absence due to a holiday in term time or

- Where a child has at least 20 sessions (10 school days) recorded as unauthorised absence during the previous 14 weeks and the pupil has failed a 15 day warning period or
- Where a child has been excluded is present in a public place during the first 5 days without reasonable justification

Penalty notices will only be issued within the terms of the Code of Conduct. The Education Welfare Service is responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices in the area of the City of Hull.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the Academy to be unacceptable or not genuine.

Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Where no explanation has been offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation is unsatisfactory e.g. shopping, birthdays
- Family holidays which have been taken without prior consent
- Lateness after close of registers (9.30am) without a satisfactory explanation
- Any requests for authorised absence when the Academy does not agree that leave should be given

### **Lateness**

When children arrive late into the Academy, it not only impacts on the child's education but also on other children in the class if teaching is interrupted. Registers close at 9.00am, after which time your child is late and will be marked as an 'L' in the class register. After 9.30am, your child will be marked as 'U', which is an unauthorised absence and not count towards attendance. Our attendance policy should ensure that:

- Registration procedures are consistently applied by all staff
- We communicate our policy regularly with parents/carers
- We balance any sanctions with positive encouragement, as we would not wish to discourage a latecomer from attending at all
- We praise and acknowledge punctuality and latecomers who improve
- We follow up reasons for lateness and look for patterns and issues
- We have an effective system for monitoring lateness, including a text to inform parents/carers
- We ensure that all teaching staff set a good example by arriving punctually in classrooms for registration and lessons
- We recognise that the responsibility for children failing to arrive punctually may rest with parents/carers rather than with the child

### **Regular unauthorised absence (persistent absence)**

A child is deemed to be a persistent absentee if his or her attendance is less than 90%, regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised. Parents/carers of children with persistent absence may incur a penalty notice but it is hoped that the preventative work that the Academy and outside agencies will undertake with families will help to secure improved and regular school attendance.

### **Removing children from the Academy roll and CME (Children Missing in Education)**

It is important that families get the support they need to secure a child's education. Academies have a legal duty to inform the Local Authority if a child is leaving the Academy. Often this proves helpful to the family when trying to secure a new school/academy, especially when relocating to a new area. To help us in this process we encourage parents/carers to inform us as soon as they are aware of any impending departure and provide as much information regarding new address, forwarding school etc.

### **Rewards and Incentives**

Our system of rewards and incentives ensures that we have an emphasis on promoting and encouraging good attendance and on recognising improved attendance to offer further encouragement.

Who to acknowledge:

- 100% attenders, termly and annually
- Consistently good attenders – over 96%
- Poor attenders who show an improvement in attendance and punctuality

Excellent or improved attendance will be acknowledged by a range of rewards or incentives, which may include:

- Letters to parents
- Certificates
- Weekly Class Attendance Champions have an additional playtime
- Weekly Class Attendance Champions who achieve 100% receive a tray of flapjack

Class will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is a concern about a child's absence, they will notify the Attendance Officer or office staff immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Principal or Vice Principal, who will contact the parents or carers.